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## THE LONDON SEASON

*Also by*

LOUIS T. STANLEY

LIFE IN CAMBRIDGE

GERMANY AFTER THE WAR

THE UNIVERSITY CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

THE BEAUTY OF WOMAN

LONDON INNS

# THE LONDON SEASON



LOUIS T. STANLEY

With illustrations by

ALAN CRISP

PREFACE BY ALFRED NOYES

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY BOSTON  
The Riverside Press Cambridge  
1956

*Printed in Great Britain*

To  
JEAN



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am indebted to the editors of *The Queen* and *The Sketch*, and Messrs. Macdonald & Co., Ltd., for their courteous permission to republish certain extracts.





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## PREFACE

In this delightful book Mr. Louis Stanley spreads his net wider and gives us considerably more than the title suggests. It opens, as the Season does, with a private view of the Royal Academy.

This gives Mr. Stanley an opportunity for many amusing and shrewd observations, both on those who accept that august body as the comprehensive arbiter of all contemporary art, and on those who cynically and sometimes less honestly would deny the Academy every virtue and ignore the useful end it serves.

These things and occasional flashes back into history and the beginnings of the Academy, with Reynolds and Gainsborough (not altogether ignoble representatives) form the background to his picture of the contemporary social scene, its chatter, and patter, and his acutely observed and amusingly depicted types of the people who stroll through Burlington House in the Season and conventionally admire, or sometimes even more conventionally turn up their fashionable noses at what they see there.

Covent Garden, in another field, gives him similar opportunities. We walk into it through what may be called an impressionistic picture of gorgeously coloured fruit and vegetables by Van Gogh.

It is as modern as you please; but there is a touch of nostalgia in the air. You may even recall the pre-war days when, after the Boat Race, undergraduates with newly acquired opera hats under their arms or stuck on the back of their heads, would drive in hansom cabs to the Covent Garden hall.

When you get into the Opera House itself the curtain rolls back and, before the ballet or the opera begins, you have a vivid and picturesque glimpse in long perspective of the earlier history of Covent Garden, back through the days when it was one of the most malodorous districts of London to the time when Samuel Pepys and Charles II found amusement there; and still earlier to the convent from which Covent Garden originally took its name. This convent, by some strange whim of the *Zeitgeist*, once stood

in a dark and demure silence on the very site which is now the centre of the world's most glittering forms of entertainment.

Interesting little historical facts of this kind are so deftly woven into the texture of Mr. Stanley's book that, without knowing it, and certainly without suffering any pain, under the genial anaesthetic of his humour one may acquire a great deal of information about London and its past, while one is enjoying his comments on the contemporary Season. You may know, for instance, that the formal request for candles in the House of Commons when dusk sets in goes back to the days when candles were its only means of illumination; but I doubt whether you knew (I certainly did not) that the obeisance to the Empty Chair when members leave the House is a relic of the days when that sign of reverence was made to a now vanished altar, in St. Stephen's Chapel.

Some of the most amusing pages in Mr. Stanley's book are devoted to what he calls feminine wiles, the very source of the London Season. He has many apt phrases on this subject, particularly on those semi-human incarnations of the fashion plate whose "Slavonic Eyes", he says, appear constantly to be inviting "a proposal of marriage or something equivalent", but Mr. Stanley is no misogynist. Pretty faces, in punts at Henley, attract him as they do at Lord's and elsewhere, but he has a wholesome love of nature and the open air as opposed to stuffiness and crowded rooms. If his chapter on salmon fishing and the seasonal habits of the salmon appears to be a digression, it may be justified by its recollection of the days when London itself was a fishing centre, and the Strand was really a strand from which anglers could practise the art of Izaak Walton. I am not sure, but I think there may be a delicate ironical comparison between the seasonal movements of the salmon and the annual migration to the city on the Thames. I believe that the pleasant invitation to write this preface came to me because half a century ago I wrote a poem with the refrain "*Come down to Kew in lilac-time*". Indeed, one dazzling day in the London Season I had a momentary feeling of notoriety when I saw some buses, enscribed with a verse of that poem, rolling away in the direction of Kew. But now I feel as I think the author of this book feels, that there is a good deal to be said for Autumn. His own reason is that it gives him a chance of escaping with a gun. But there is much to be said for late Autumn

in London also, when good Dickensy fogs draw a cosy curtain round the windows and make the lights and the fires all the brighter within. There is even more, perhaps, to be said for those evenings of clear-shining after rain when London becomes a place of kaleidoscopic colours and reflections.

Now in the twilight, after rain  
The wet black street shines out again . . .

And paved with fragments of the skies  
Our sooty town like Venice lies . . .

Buses (with coloured panes that spill  
A splash of cherry or daffodil)  
And lighted faces, row on row,  
From darkness into darkness go.

O Love, what need have you and I  
Of vine and palm and azure sky,  
And who would sail for Greece or Rome  
When such a highway leads him home?

ALFRED NOYES





## HOW THE LONDON SEASON BEGAN

IT is impossible to give an exact date when the London Season began. It was a slow growth that came into being in the reign of Charles I as an escapist release from boredom. Life on a country estate was monotonous. The young gentlewoman had no option other than to stay at home and assist with housewifery. Daughters had to observe the wishes of mamma. This extract taken from a letter shows how the more docile reacted to this discipline: “. . . So scrupulous was I of giving any occasion to speak of me as I know they did of others, that, though I loved well to see plays and to walk in the Spring Garden sometimes (before it grew scandalous by the abuse of some) yet I cannot remember three times that ever I went with any man besides my brothers. . . . And I was the first that prepared and practised three or four of us going together without any man, and everyone paying for themselves. . . . And this I did first upon hearing some gentlemen telling what ladies they had waited on at the plays, and how much it had cost them; upon which I resolved none should say the same of me.”

But not all women were so subdued. Many refused to be buried alive in the country and insisted on being taken by their husbands to London where they could parade in all their finery. By degrees an aristocratic community began to take root in the West End. After rural boredom, the would-be pleasure-seekers found plenty of scope for frivolity. The choice must have been bewildering. The wealthy could attend a play; watch a cock-fight; take a barge up-stream to Chelsea, or a hackney-coach from the Maypole in the Strand; sup, dice and court in some outlying village; play *paille maille* or bowls; attend fashionable water parties or masques, whilst card games were endless. Officialdom frowned on the waste of time and money. Those who indulged were sent home, whilst penalties were imposed by the Star Chamber on all who flaunted the ruling.

With the Restoration of Charles II in 1660, reaction against Puritanical repression became marked. The King had spent his

exile at the Court of Louis XIV, where the most lavish fashions followed one another in rapid succession. It was inevitable that he was conscious of not only restoring the Stuart dynasty, but also infusing something of the Continental colour and gaiety into the English Court and general way of life. The rich flocked back to London from the country. Town houses began to appear in the meadows near Piccadilly and Leicester Square. It became fashionable to live as close as possible to the Court. Theatres reopened and were packed to suffocation. Pepys saw a thousand people turned away from a performance of *She Would if She Could*. He was a regular patron and appeared not to mind being accidentally spat upon by ladies in front . . . seemingly play-goers spat backwards, over the shoulder. Audiences were rowdy. Women now played women's parts, whilst Nell Gwyn and the "Orange Molls" exchanged badinage with the bucks in the audience at Killigrew's new theatre at Drury Lane. Almost all the former sports returned. Both Pepys and Evelyn watched bull-baiting at the Bear Garden. Cock-fighting was exceptionally popular. Pepys records how he saw at a cock-pit in Shoe Lane "people who look as if they had not bread to put in their mouths betting three or four pounds, losing and betting as much again". Stakes were considerable. Evelyn saw a wrestling match in St. James's Park with £1,000 laid.

Pleasure gardens attracted crowds. Tom Brown described the old Spring Gardens near the Mall as full of gallantry, whilst the Mulberry Garden was noted for its love-making and celebrated Spanish cook. The New Spring Gardens, later Vauxhall, had just begun, whilst 1683 saw an enormous Ice Fair on the Thames. The fashionable trend was still westwards. Berkeley, Soho, and St. James's Square came after the Restoration. The Mall and St. James's Park drew the fops and fashion-plates for the morning stroll. Hyde Park was the setting for coaches. Everything catered for restless women and bored men who wanted to indulge in "a very merry, dancing, drinking, laughing, quaffing and unthinking time".

The merry-go-round of pleasure experienced a frightful setback in two catastrophic blows: the Great Plague and the Great Fire. In the intense heat of that summer of 1665 the plague spread with terrible rapidity. Decent burial was impossible. The dead were shovelled into pits in Bunhill Fields and in Tothill



Royal Ascot is almost the last stronghold where England is shown to be a monarchical country with an aristocracy



Fields, in Deadmans Place in Southwark, in Earl Street, Westminster, and in Hand Alley, Bishopsgate. Business ceased. Grass grew in front of the Royal Exchange. Two hundred thousand people out of a population of almost 700,000 fled from the city. Winter saw the plague abated, but the final cleansing came with the Great Fire. Five-sixths of the city were burnt out; 13,200 houses disappeared in the flames; 436 acres became rubble; 200,000 people were homeless.

The rebuilding of London saw further moves of the fashionable set to the west. In the Georgian period the division became a clear-cut line of demarcation between the City and the West End. London was flooded with diversions, whilst exotic imports from overseas commerce added extra touches of novelty. The slave trade, mercantile toil, and the spoils of the Indies enabled the new rich to build country houses in Marylebone and Islington. The twin foci of gaiety and fashion were Vauxhall and Ranelagh, with their classic-romantic groves, rotundas, and grottoes.

From such a pleasure-seeking background came the London Season. 'Tis true we cannot match the extravagance of their masquerades, ridottos, and routs, but there is much to be said for the brief round of enjoyment and twentieth-century gaiety that begins with the opening of the Royal Academy. By a circuitous route we sample all the events that by consent now belong to the Season: Henley, Lord's, Epsom Downs, Eton, Chelsea Flower Show, the Royal Tournament, the International Horse Show, the Royal Courts, Trooping the Colour, Covent Garden, until we reach the verdant loveliness of Goodwood, then beyond to Cowes and the moors.

In this crowded engagement-list Ascot stands out as the best example of the democratic nature of the Season. Admittedly one aspect of Ascot is exclusive. It is the premier out-of-doors social function of the Season. It is Royal Ascot, and there are not many places left in England that can be labelled aristocratical. There is no need to be ashamed about the tag. In spite of certain elements, England is still a monarchical country with an aristocracy. But the public enjoy the day just as much. On the Heath is democracy in its breeziest sense . . . from champagne to jellied eels . . . all contribute to a day graced by the pageantry of the Royal Procession when the Queen and members of the Royal Family with

their guests drive along the course, originally, from the Golden Gates, into the enclosure behind the Royal Stand. That moment, crowned by the unfurling of the Royal Standard from the mast over the Royal Box, spans the centuries since the days of Queen Anne and Dean Swift. It mirrors the London Season in miniature.

## THE ROYAL ACADEMY

THE opening of the Royal Academy marks the beginning of the Season, the first step along a path made pleasant by such names as Epsom, Covent Garden, Lord's, Henley, Ascot and Eton. To some people, this light-hearted whirl of pleasure is out of place. It smacks too much of privileged wealth and aristocratic tradition. These tub-thumpers of social equality overlook the fact that many of the out-of-door functions that form the Season are enjoyed by all sorts of people, rich and poor, proletariat and bourgeois, idle rich and all. If these events only enabled the fortunate to sun themselves in their good fortune, the Season would wither and die. But, as I have stressed already, this carnival of radiant youth and mature experience persists. It circles round the Royal Courts and draws to a close at Goodwood in July. It is an integral part of our social background.

The Royal Academy is a happy choice as the forerunner of this pageantry. It is an extremely popular institution . . . quite different from any other kind of artistic body . . . that fits naturally in an atmosphere which welcomes the Opera, the Derby, Eton and Harrow. Just as Piccadilly is more than a street, so the Academy is more than an exhibition of works of art. It is the common meeting ground of the people in their search for aesthetic satisfaction. The exhibition begins on a suave note with the sleek smartness of the private view . . . a delightful artificial façade of convention embellished by the warmth of connoisseurs, the veneer of idle gossip, gentle slander, and casual looks. This selective air gives way to the more robust atmosphere of the first public day. The brass turnstiles click continuously and spill into crowded galleries an extraordinary cross-section of the community. Long-haired curiosities who might be either sex . . . slim young women with pretty faces and shapeless clothes that somehow hold together . . . frustrated spinsters armed with a smattering of artistic jargon . . . an occasional bizarre creature resplendent in what is intended to reflect the fashions of the previous day . . . fragile white-haired Victorian ladies who handle their catalogues



with a gracious touch . . . an army of inarticulate men inveigled into Burlington House by feminine charm. The blending is remarkable, something like the spirit of Chelsea on Ascot Heath. The onlooker drifts on a wave of artistic generalities and studio heartiness. Even the graceful young woman who can always be found sitting about somewhere without her clothes looks quietly amused as she surveys us from an ornate picture frame, closely guarded by a still-life from Cornwall, the promenade at Brighton replete with seagulls, waves and trippers, and a commissioned portrait of a municipal councillor who looks a trifle uneasy about the nakedness of his attractive neighbour.

It is all so familiar, a familiarity both dangerous and misleading. The layman reads into the exhibition a significance that was never originally intended by the founder. To be an exhibitor does not confer the title of a good artist. Conversely, to be excluded is not a disgrace. The idea that exclusion places a stigma upon an artist's skill is due to the erroneous belief that to be hung at the Royal Academy carries with it a diploma of artistic merit. This is not the case. A modicum of technical proficiency, at times not always apparent, is more than sufficient to qualify, with the additional good fortune of not being "crowded out" by being the wrong shape, size, or colour scheme. A common fallacy about the Royal Academy is that it is representative of contemporary English art. It is only necessary to scan the names of those associated with contemporary artistic works in this country to realize the omissions. The Academy is not necessarily responsible for these absentees, but an exhibition that leaves out artists of distinction cannot be called fully representative.

A clique has for long considered it the correct thing to be rude to the Royal Academy. In many ways the tilts are justified. Even the friendly critic has to admit an unimaginative solidity that suggests Browning's "'Garniture and household stuff". At its best the Academy picture is dull and ordinary. Occasionally some intensification of colour and broadening of touch lifts a picture out of the rut of convention. But, on the whole, it is solid, comfortable stuff, fundamentally conservative, and in keeping with the pronouncement of W. R. M. Lamb, its Secretary for over thirty years. . . . "To keep the main body of art alive, through regular intercourse with the perceptions and feelings of ordinary people—who must be familiar with the normal forms before they



can appreciate the strange fruits of experiment—is one great duty of the Royal Academy.” The advice has been well followed. The hanging committee might be likened to the bishop who counselled his ordinands: “Always be true to your convictions; in nine cases out of ten they will be right. Never give your reasons; in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred they will be wrong.”

Such devotion to conviction is laudable in a narrow sense. But it is regrettable that the continuous growth of popular interest in artistic matters should be instructed in such limited fashion. The Royal Academy shares in the work of educating people in a sense of beauty, and of showing that in a nation greatness and ugliness cannot go together. Art does not mean merely the making of pictures and statues for the delectation of the few. The Arts should be regarded as an important and necessary factor in our national life. The layman confesses that he knows nothing about art, but he knows what he likes. The instinct is natural. Everyone is born with the potentialities of artistic appreciation. Degrees vary. Few attain that delicate awareness described by Blake as being able “to see the world in a grain of sand, And heaven in a wild flower”. And yet the suggestion is there. The colour scheme of a woman’s *ensemble*, the deft touch in arranging flowers, the lay-out of a garden by a man—these are the actions of an artist, only the latter translates his reactions on a canvas.

The layman is conscious of this inner artistic feeling. He enjoys the Royal Academy as the visible expression of this urge. The introvert sees himself as an extrovert. But, knowing nothing of the basic principles of aesthetic evaluation, informed comparison is impossible. The Royal Academy glorifies the contemporary, and at times the works are pleasing and of high merit, but, judged by the truism that there is only good and bad art, what is hung leaves much to be desired. A ready appreciation of contemporary art is a healthy sign, but alongside should be placed an awareness of what has gone before, a knowledge of the Masters and the masterpieces that preceded the foundation of English art. Few people have this background. The tragedy is that evidence of this gradual evolution of artistic greatness is in London for all to see, only, like Pilate, the layman hurries past and refuses to look at truth.

The National Gallery is laden with richness. All the stepping

stones are there to bridge the centuries. The exquisite "John Arnolfini and his Wife" painted by John Van Eyck with the eye of a miniaturist, takes us back to the fourteenth century. The expressive beauty of the "Virgin of the Rock" reflects the touch of Leonardo da Vinci. Compare it with the icy loveliness of Botticelli's "Madonna and Child". The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were cluttered with artists of genius. The art was unknown in France, Spain and England. The spotlight alternated between Italy and the Netherlands. Michelangelo dominated the scene. Two of his unfinished works are in the National Gallery. Tintoretto and Paolo Veronese are also represented. Raphael's "Ansidei Madonna" that defies criticism ought to be studied. It was bought from the Duke of Marlborough in 1884 for the then record figure of £70,000. These names mark the close of the Italian dynasty. Spain comes next to the forefront, headed by El Greco. The aesthetic-looking "Luigi Cornaro" is a good example of his work. Then such illustrious names as Rubens; Frans Hals; Claude; Rembrandt; Velasquez, court painter to Philip IV of Spain; Van Dyck, the master of graceful refinement, who took the English Court by storm; Jan Steen, boisterous and often coarse.

The forthright advent of the brusque William Hogarth, born 1697, marked the first British painter of note. England had entered the painting world. Hogarth is well represented in the National Gallery. Sir Joshua Reynolds was born twenty-five years later. He was a grave figure of courtly mannerisms. He founded the "Literary Club" with such members as Garrick, Johnson, Goldsmith, Burke, Boswell, Sheridan, Walpole, and Gibbon. He immortalized the appearance and mannerisms of the society of his day in his paintings. On 10th December, 1786, the Royal Academy came into being. Joshua Reynolds was asked to be the first President.

The portraits of Gainsborough are unrivalled. He portrayed the gaiety and beauty of English women with a feathery vivacity. His dream-like idyll called "The Mall" drew from Horace Walpole the remark: "It is all in motion and in a flutter like a lady's fan." The essence of daintiness is expressed in Sir Thomas Lawrence's "Pinkie", the nymph-like child study sold for £77,700 in 1926. To this galaxy of talent must be added the pioneer eighteenth- and nineteenth-century landscape painters—Wilson. Old Crome.

Constable, and Turner. Whistler, of pure beauty. Pre-Raphaelitism and its founders—Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Millais, and Holman Hunt. Cézanne, Gauguin, Van Gogh, Picasso, Matisse . . . the list is almost endless, but in time it halts alongside the present exhibitors as the Royal Academy speeds the Season on its fanciful way.

## COVENT GARDEN

**T**OM BROWN wrote in 1690: "London is a world by itself . . . among the Londoners are so many nations differing in manners, customs, and religions, that the inhabitants themselves don't know a quarter of them." If that was true in his time, then how much more today with the population of the County of London four times as great, and Greater London adding four million more to the unwieldy total. Almost all of these millions have heard of Covent Garden, yet only a handful have seen with their own eyes the scene so readily imagined, and an even smaller number know anything of its early history . . . its origin . . . its chequered story throughout the centuries.

The man who refuses to walk the deserted streets of London at five o'clock in the morning in order to see the market for himself allows imagination to paint the scene. And probably the scene he visualizes is not entirely false, though it is certain to be daubed in softer colours than reality. Covent Garden is an allegorical resurrection. In the half-light of day, carts, wagons and lorries rumble over the London bridges towards these three acres of profusion. They bring with them the mud of farms and dialects of country lanes as I write, now yellow with hazel catkins. The side-streets are jammed tight. Cloth-capped porters hurry to and fro like courtiers of Nature. The richness of heaped produce looks like a vivid canvas of Van Gogh. Here is an anthology of the seasons . . . the vegetable world in all its glory . . . oranges, tangerines in silver jackets, Canadian apples, festoons of grapes, carrots, grapefruit from Cuba, shades of green in watercress, parsley, shallots, and the familiar fronds of the cabbage, onions with shining faces, beetroot, swedes, parsnips with long sensitive roots. To this mass add the colours of glorious masses of flowers. It is a gay scene. The fruits of the earth piled in a London street market.

The association is not uneasy. Centuries ago vegetables and flowers were grown where this market now stands. It was then the Convent Garden of St. Peter's. What was grown went to

the table of the Abbot of Westminster. London had been pastoral for many years. William Fitzstephen, secretary to Thomas à Becket, confirms the rusticity of London's population of roughly 40,000 in the biography of his master replate. . . . "The Thames abounds with fish. On the north side are fields for pasture and a delightful plain of flat meadow land, interspersed with flowing streams, on which stand mills whose clack is very pleasing to the ear. Close by lies an immense forest (Enfield Chase) in which are densely wooded thickets, the coverts of game, stags, fallow deer, boars and wild bulls."

The subsequent history of Covent Garden falls into four divisions. The Convent was disestablished and disendowed. Weeds ran riot, until the Earl of Bedford, in conjunction with Inigo Jones, the father of the English Renaissance, built around it the quadrangle and the Piazza. On two sides enormous colonnades were raised, and soon the Garden became the recognized parading-ground of gentlemen of fashion and their mistresses. The surrounding area became a fashionable suburb patronized in the Restoration by Charles and his frivolous Court for their gambling and insatiable amours. This era of popular dissipation was interrupted by two catastrophes that altered the face of London. Pepys in his diary records on 6th June, 1665: "The hottest day I ever felt in my life. This day, much against my will, I did in Drury Lane see two or three houses marked with a red cross upon the doors, and 'Lord have mercy upon us!' writ there; which was a sad sight to me, being the first of the kind that, to my remembrance, I ever saw. It put me into an ill conception of myself and my smell, so that I was forced to buy some roll-tobacco to smell and chew, which took away the apprehension." That sign must have been common in Covent Garden. At night the rumble of the carts, precursors of those that now come at dawn, blended their noise with the dirge-like cry—"Bring out your dead." Three months later Pepys wrote to Lady Carteret: "I have stayed in the City till above 7,400 died in one week and of them about 6,000 of the plague, and little noise heard day or night but the tolling of the bells." The final total was one hundred thousand deaths. To these horrors was added the Great Fire in which acres of dwellings were destroyed. In a few months the shape and size of London had changed. The second chapter in the history of Covent Garden had opened.

The fashionable world gradually moved westwards and houses of distinction were turned into tenements. This area deteriorated rapidly and became one of the most infamous quarters of London. Sir John Fielding summarized the condition in 1766: "One of the principal causes of the number of bawdy-houses being collected together in or near Covent Garden, is there having been several estates in the courts and contiguous streets where the leases of the houses were so near expiring that it was not worth while to repair them till they were out, by which means they were let for almost nothing to the lowest of wretches, who hired three or four of them, and filled them with common prostitutes. This made Exeter Street, Change Court, Eagle Court and Little Catherine Street so infamous that it was dangerous for persons to pass and repass." The law which allowed such places to obtain a wine licence from the Stamp Office as a substitute for a magisterial licence added to the confusion. It was an evil time for Covent Garden, and "Tomkyn's" and the "Rose" carried on a roaring trade for "gentlemen to whom beds are unknown".

The third stage was inaugurated as early as 1680 when the vegetable market was established, but almost a century had to pass before it was finally settled. A feature at the beginning of the nineteenth century was the seasonal migration to Covent Garden of Shropshire and Welsh girls. They came on foot in droves and were employed moving loads of fruit to the market. It was common for these young women to carry a heavy load from Ealing to Covent Garden—roughly nine miles—sometimes making the double journey twice a day, for a weekly wage of five or seven shillings. These country wenches must have brought a breath of fresh air into a murky atmosphere.

The last chapter came in 1732 when Covent Garden Theatre was built by the harlequin, John Rich. That first building was very small, the stage measuring 20 ft. by 47 ft., but it had this advantage—the granting of Letters Patent by King Charles II to one William Davenant, "his heirs and assigns", which allowed "tragedies, comedies, plays, operas, musick, scenes, and all other entertainment of the stage whatsoever". From this foundation the theatre began with Congreve's *Way of the World*, but soon turned to opera, the first being Thomas Arne's *Artaxerxes*. In 1736 Handel's *Atalanta* was performed by Royal Command, the composer in this performance insisting that a solo be given to his





On great occasions Covent Garden is a moving mass of animated humanity reflecting and radiating every shade of brilliance and colour



chef, Gustavus Waltz. On 16th May, 1767, there is a record of Charles Dibdin accompanying the singer Miss Brickler on the piano, the first time that instrument is mentioned in English music. Rich's theatre was destroyed by fire in 1808. The then Prince of Wales laid the foundation stone for the new theatre later that same year, in fact in the vaults of the present building can be seen this three-ton block of masonry bearing the inscription: "Long live George, Prince of Wales." The rebuilt theatre was the largest in Europe, but it had a similar fate, being burned down in 1856.

The present structure by Barrie was opened in 1858. Here is the only Covent Garden known to many people. The earthy smell of vegetables and soil never reaches that sweeping amphitheatre of scarlet and gold with its tiers and boxes and glittering lights. Here every great singer from Caruso to Gigli, Tetrizzini to Flagstad, has appeared, no international reputation being complete without an appearance in London's leading opera house; here Sadler's Wells Ballet with the brilliant prima ballerina, Margot Fonteyn, the talented choreographer, Frederick Ashton, and the inspired direction of Dame Ninette de Valois has become the greatest ballet company in the world outside the Soviet Union. On great occasions the entire theatre is a moving mass of animated humanity reflecting and radiating every shade of brilliance and colour, such as that Spring night in 1946 when, before an audience that included the late King, and Queen, the two Princesses and the ambassadors from every embassy and legation in London, the Royal Opera House re-opened with a rich new production of *The Sleeping Beauty*, perhaps the most famous of the Russian classical ballets . . . an unforgettable night of pageantry . . . everything being dwarfed by those massive curtains of crimson.

Two worlds exist side by side. One has links with Westminster Abbey. The other, a tradition that goes back to the first production of *The Messiah* in 1741 with Handel as conductor . . . a tradition that today is murmured in the same breath as the Scala in Milan, and the Metropolitan Opera House in New York . . . a jewel of brilliance in the Season. A bell summons us. The scarlet stalls and boxes are filling. Every tier of the sweeping amphitheatre is filling. The lights fade like dying glow-worms. The curve of a woman's shoulder looks momentarily like ivory. The

orchestra snatches at a few stray notes. Applause greets the conductor. He bows . . . taps the stand with his baton. The theatre wells to the music of Tchaikovsky . . . familiar chords . . . then slowly the huge curtains part . . . and delicate wraiths of grace float across the stage. It is a visual interpretation of a musical emotion. Music and ballet become fused in an inarticulate, unfathomable speech which leads us to the edge of the infinite and allows us for moments to gaze into that. Ballet becomes the ectoplasm of music. We follow the romance of Odette and Siegfried until the final voyage through the waters of the lake to the world of eternal happiness.

I came away feeling sad that in England it is considered a little unwholesome to think of things aesthetically. . . . "I'll wipe it acrost yer face!" . . . Irishmen are the same the world over. They have so little sense of compromise that an Irish girl has to choose between perpetual adoration and perpetual pregnancy. An infuriated Irish porter threatening his mate with an outsize broccoli was my farewell to Covent Garden.

## THE HEART OF MAYFAIR

THERE is something terrifying about a herd of strolling females. I feel that way about Bond Street. The most unconscious thoroughfare in London of potential wealth and luxury attracts every type of woman. You find them all there. It is an astonishing sight, an education for any man. The drift has a migratory note about it. It must have in spite of the suggestion of aimless wandering. I put it to the test. Two women turned off Piccadilly and began the parade of Bond Street. I followed at a discreet distance. They were types. One had reached the time of life when the years lap the forty-mark, but never quite get there. Her conversation had to be half a pitch higher than her companion's to be effective. Inability to comprehend anything other than prattling inanities had obviously devised a stock-cliché of defence. The first hundred yards produced this repetitive gem: "My dear, I told him he was quite the wittiest thing in creation." The observation was hardly complimentary to the Almighty, but doubtless it sufficed for her purpose. Her friend had shapely legs, an overdressed body, surmounted by a pair of limp Slavonic eyes that expected a proposal of marriage, or something like it, from every man they met.

Here indeed were typical Bond Street *habitués*. I listened. I did not eavesdrop. What I heard was meant to be heard. Everyone within earshot was meant to hear what they said. After the first few hundred yards the topic became clothes. There was nothing unusual about that. Women always talk about clothes. The first touch of Spring and wardrobes are described as threadbare. Fashion magazines had given them a lively sense of evaluation. The points they made were heartfelt, at times almost indignant. A naïve observer might have been impressed by their intimate knowledge of fashion trends, but such strong censure called for examination of the critic. I found it difficult to imagine how any woman could feel so strongly about a technical fashion defect and then emerge into public gaze in garments that offended the eye of man.

That is the difference between male and female shoppers. Women become extroverts, men become furtive. Our shops are not blatant. We change in some dark recess. Our shirts, socks and ties are stocked away in unobtrusive fashion. Females are the reverse. They become shameless in their vanity. Bond Street produces the reaction in a big way. It is a street of quality, more dignified than Fifth Avenue, more human than the Rue de la Paix. This narrow thoroughfare, planned by Sir Thomas Bond in the latter half of the seventeenth century, has everything that the connoisseur of taste can want. Enter any of the shops and an obsequious acolyte steps forward. Everything becomes a work of art. The dainty manicurist who transforms a delicate shell-like nail into a shining shield of colour. The *salon* where elegant young women with manner and uniform that suggest a compromise between a mannequin and a nurse, conjure complexions out of shining pots. Everything is brittle. People who have never met before discuss trivialities with earnest insincerity. In such an atmosphere women tend to indulge in a Turkish bath of immodest sympathy. A man feels like a stranger in a butterfly farm.

This sensation becomes exaggerated at a display of new fashions. We make the mistake of looking upon mannequins as human. I know it is a mistake. The female sitting next to you confirms the fact in no uncertain fashion. No ordinary person could face such an ordeal in languorous, sophisticated grace. A mannequin glides into a gold pool of light. A living fashion plate with the imprimatur of Bond Street. I remember one in particular. She was the complete gamine. The rhythmic body, tilted neck, provocative eyes, slow caressing smile proclaimed her as the artist consummate in coquetry. Her face was a magnet, her eye an invitation. Here was the real Maupassant gamine, the personification of what the medievalists portrayed in stained glass and wood-carving as *Luxury*.

Then I thought of those for whom this gamine was deploying her blandishments. I looked round and studied three rows of apathetic women customers. These were some of the females who parade Bond Street. Beside the mannequin they resembled inexpressive dowds. Some of them might be wheedled into buying gowns. Few looked as if they would fit let alone suit the creations we had seen. It is difficult not to become cynical. In Bond Street fashionably dressed women cast roving eyes, not on men but over

other women. They show contempt for inferiors in looks or costume. They value approbation of their equals. In London, women dress for women, not for men, and Bond Street is their parade ground.

The art galleries are the most restful feature of Bond Street. Attention wanders from the walls to those who drift from picture to picture. Some well-known artist is exhibiting. The private view is the most revealing. Somehow those who attend always look the same. The men adopt an over-emphasized air of intelligence. The women seem to have little dress-sense. The expert stands in a humble background of pseudo-Chelsea art-patter that sounds good but means nothing. Everything is related to "middle-distance" with the usual peering with purblind eye. Antique shops provide the atmosphere that links Bond Street with the past, a past that knew such residents as Sir Thomas Lawrence, Boswell and Laurence Sterne, who completed *A Sentimental Journey* at No. 41, whilst New Bond Street attracted Dean Swift, Nelson and Lady Hamilton. Some of the furniture knew the lazy tempo of the eighteenth century. The sober Queen Anne walnut, perhaps a piece that knew the touch of Nell Gwyn, or that dream of a connoisseur, a piece of furniture that actually came from Chippendale's premises in Long Acre, or the later shop and factory in St. Martin's Lane . . . perhaps this chair might be one of the few saved from the fire that destroyed the craftsman's workshop in 1755, a fire which confirmed how limited must have been his output, for the shop only contained the chests of twenty-two workmen. Hepplewhite and Sheraton combine to rival the beauty of Gainsborough, Raeburn and Romney. How they find their way to this street is often a tragic story of our days.

It is impossible to confine Bond Street to the limits of a normal thoroughfare. Cosmopolitan, self-assured and well bred, it is the heart of Mayfair. Walk along it at a leisurely pace and enjoy what only Bond Street can offer . . . pretty faces, elegant clothes, dignified windows. As the day turns into evening, gay lights add colour to the scene. Limousines glide by . . . taxicabs slide up to the kerb . . . in the distance can be heard the roar of Piccadilly traffic. London at night demands the skill and appreciation of Whistler . . . Bond Street needs the subtle palate for vintage wine, both rare and costly.

## TEA ON THE TERRACE

TEA on the terrace of the Palace of Westminster sounds exciting, but it usually only amounts to cucumber sandwiches and strawberries and cream. The invitation, however, should enable you to see for yourself some of the ceremonies of Parliament, to sit in the Central Lobby as private grievances are aired to Members, to find a corner in the Debating Chambers where other traditional formalities are noted.

“Mr. Speaker, I call for candles!”

These six words belong to the House of Commons and are the archaic form of asking for light when dusk creeps into the Chamber. This is but one of the many ways in which the continuity of Parliamentary tradition has been preserved throughout the centuries in this Palace of Westminster. It is easy, however, for the casual observer to feel that many of these customs are void of meaning. He is insensitive to their significance. There is, for instance, a privilege exercised in the first hour of every session of the House that invariably escapes attention. The Speaker, preceded by the Mace, symbol of the authority delegated to him by the Crown, enters the House, followed by his train-bearer, chaplain and secretary. The Mace is laid upon the table. The chaplain reads a prayer and bows himself out. The Speaker takes his seat. The proceedings open with Questions to Ministers, which were handed in the day before. Question Time is the clearing-ground of domestic detail. The hour when back-benchers are free to reveal their individuality. And frequently the rank and file are dissatisfied with the answers they receive. It is then that the familiar formula is used:

“In view of the unsatisfactory nature of the reply, I give notice that I shall raise the matter on the adjournment.”



These words embody a closely guarded privilege of the Commons . . . the right to be heard . . . a postulate linked with the Petition of Rights that was passed in 1628, the Speaker on that occasion being forcibly prevented from adjourning the House.

Another feature that the visitor may notice is the way Members, upon entering or leaving the Chamber, bow towards the Speaker's Chair. This signal of respect is not directed to the Speaker. It represents a reverent act of obeisance to an altar that no longer exists . . . an altar that stood in St. Stephen's Chapel, for centuries the meeting-place of the House. The site is now a bleak corridor tenanted by marble statesmen, yet here it was that Charles I came to demand from Speaker Lenthall the names of the five Members who had escaped by barge to the City . . . that Cromwell seized the bauble and dismissed the Long Parliament . . . and the walls once echoed to the voices of Chatham, Pym, Canning, Hampden, Fox, Townshend, and the younger Pitt.

These are but two of innumerable ceremonial observances. They range from such moments as when a Minister on the Front Bench rises and says, "Mr. Speaker! I spy strangers" . . . to the searching of the cellars at the beginning of every Session, and the application of a Member for "the Chiltern Hundreds". It is interesting to note those which mark the place and influence of the Crown within the Constitution. The origin of constitutional authority is traced to the Sovereign. Justice is dispensed by the judges in her name. Cabinet Ministers are theoretically the Queen's advisers and servants. Her Proclamation is necessary before Parliament can be summoned or dissolved. Royal prerogative determines the creation or prorogation of its Session. The Royal Assent, pronounced in Norman French, is required before an Act can become law.

The ceremony surrounding this last formality is rich in detail and tradition. During a debate, the Serjeant-at-Arms walks past the Bar and locks the doors . . . an act symbolizing the right of the Commons to preclude even the Queen or her representatives from their Chamber. Three knocks are heard. Black Rod, the Queen's Messenger, enters, bows to the Chair, and announces at the Bar . . .

"I am commanded by the Lords to desire the attendance of this Honourable House to hear the Royal Assent given to certain Bills."

The Speaker, followed by Members, thereupon proceeds to the Upper Chamber, where three Commissioners, robed, wigged, and wearing three-cornered hats, sit on the Woolsack. The titles of the Bills are read by the Clerk of the Crown. The Commissioners solemnly raise their hats to each. And the Clerk of Parliament replies . . . or, in the event of a Money Bill . . .

The Speaker returns to the Commons, bows three times to the vacant Chair, informs the House what had happened, and the Bills become Acts.

The most colourful ceremony of all is bound up with the State Opening of Parliament . . . the most perfect ceremony of its kind in the world. It takes place in the House of Lords. It is an aristocratic Chamber, the lavish decorations and gilding, though tarnished by age, reflect the romanticism of Pugin and Barry. On this particular occasion the sheer beauty of pageantry that moves across the floor of the Upper Chamber is breath-taking. The scarlet and ermine of the peers . . . bishops in ecclesiastical robes . . . judges in ermine cloaks . . . splashes of gold of the Ambassadors to the Court of St. James . . . the loveliness of England's women in the galleries . . . the medieval appearance of the Gentlemen of the Bodyguard. Here is a magnificence that even Reinhardt never eclipsed.

As the hour draws near, conversation drops to a murmur, then ceases. All this time a golden story-book coach drawn by eight stallions with postillions in rich liveries has been carried from Buckingham Palace on the crest of cheering. The faint echo of a salvo from a salute of guns in Hyde Park indicates that Her Majesty has arrived. She must now be in the Robing Room. Then comes a moment that those who have known it can never forget. The sudden crash of sound as the silence is shattered by a fanfare of trumpets that echo and re-echo throughout the Chamber. Every light comes to life . . . and Her Majesty appears . . . a rustle of silk and ermine as peers and peeresses rise to bow . . . the slow stately progress of the Queen to the throne . . . and the Commons are summoned by the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod to hear the Speech of the Queen at the Bar of the House of Lords. The Queen stands. Her speech, couched in archaic phraseology, outlines the policy of her Government. The end comes on a note of regal dignity. A fanfare of trumpets is



Tea on the terrace of the Palace of Westminster with  
cucumber sandwiches and strawberries and cream



sounded. Her Majesty departs. The greatness and traditions of the centuries have been united. Parliament has been opened. The fundamental tenets of our Constitution have been embodied in a wealth of ancient ceremonial detail.

But these are hours of greatness. They pass. And Parliament turns to routine and work. The casual visitor looks down from one of the galleries upon a scene that is neutral in its unreality. The Chamber resembles a monotone of mellow parchment against which any accidental colour stands out in vivid contrast. The day's session is over. The Speaker leaves the Chamber, preceded by the Mace. The passage-ways, lobbies and chambers resound to the ancient cry . . . "Who goes home?" . . . a relic of an age of lanterns and link-boys. And the House disperses on the same note on which it began . . . the dignified observance of tradition, upon which the House of Commons was founded and sustained.

## PICCADILLY

COMPARED with the allure of Paris and the gaiety that once was Vienna, London is frigid and aloof. It lacks the superficial charm of the feminine capitals of Europe. And yet there is an elegance about the principal thoroughfares of London that lingers on the palate like a vintage wine. Piccadilly is one of these. It is utterly unselfconscious. Londoners take it for granted. Foreigners gravitate towards the Circus and take it to heart. In their eyes Piccadilly is the crystallized expression of contemporary England. The compliment at times is double-edged, but the fact remains that here is one of the world's termini. The ingredients are international. Colour . . . lights . . . the bedlam of traffic . . . crowded pavements . . . a surge of humanity that never ceases. Only for a brief hour before dawn is there peace and silence. It is then possible to visualize something of its beginning. The shadows and low tones beloved by Whistler make objects two-dimensional. Buildings become obscure. Piccadilly is once more "the Way to Redinge". As such it was known in the sixteenth century. A quiet lane meandering between hedges and fields. Corn was ground by a windmill still remembered by Great Windmill Street. The sounds of the country were heard beyond the city walls. Cattle grazed in Finsbury. St. Martin's Lane was a rustic walk. The proclamation of Henry VIII in 1546 ordered the preservation of "the games of Hare, Partridge, Pheasant and Heron" from the Palace of Westminster to St. Giles-in-the-Fields. Paddington was a sleepy village. St. Mary-le-bourne slept by the quiet brook that was to know the chatter of Mayfair, Brook Street and Marylebone. In such a London and close to the windmill lived Robert Baker, a tailor who conducted a fashionable trade in the Strand. Contemporary writers ascribe the origin of the name Piccadilly to this tradesman's residence. His neighbours nicknamed it "Pickadilly Hall" as an allusion to the wares that he sold. At that time "Pickadels" were worn by fashionable men and women. They were ruffs or collars that can be seen on

sculpture and effigies of that period. There is a reference by John Marston in 1598 to the diligence of laundresses in "making bands and ruffles". It is therefore more than likely that the tradition is well founded.

The subsequent history of Piccadilly is eventful. It was engulfed by the tide of fashion as it swept westward. Its stones have known the whims of centuries. The canvas is crowded without regard to historical continuity. Buckled shoes . . . cocked hats . . . sedan chairs . . . horse-trams and halfpenny fares . . . hooped skirts . . . frock coats . . . snuff-boxes . . . bloomers . . . canes . . . coffee-houses frequented by the beaux . . . side-whiskers . . . Georgian port . . . Victorian champagne . . . flower girls . . . veils . . . urchins selling nine different evening newspapers . . . gold sovereigns . . . eccentric manners . . . architectural experiments. Piccadilly has a timeless background of hilarity and a thousand personalities. But the setting has changed with the centuries. Many a ghostly toper must look in vain for his former haunts. Even Vine Street has gone. The Criterion Restaurant absorbed the White Bear Inn that had known over two hundred years' hospitality. Its rival, the Black Bear Inn, disappeared in 1820. The Berkeley, once known as the St. James's Hotel, swallowed up the Gloster Coffee-house and Hotel. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the Gloster advertised "good soups, dinners, wines, and beds".

Hatchett's succeeded the Three Kings, the original starting-point of General Palmer's first mail-coach to Bath. Strype in 1720 described a house "well known to the public on account of the great number of stage-coaches which regularly call there. In a pleasant coffee-room passengers can wait for any of the stages and travellers in general are well accommodated with beds". That was the Old White Horse Cellar. It retreated before the Ritz. When Strype wrote these words the road opposite was blocked by a turnpike gate. It was removed to Hyde Park Corner in 1721. Winstanley's eighteenth century Water Theatre is but a memory. The *Guardian* of 1713 advertised the mechanical gadgets that attracted the credulous custom . . . "six sorts of wine and brandy, to drink the Queen's health, all coming out of the barrel, with bisket and spaw water; and, as peace is enlarged, there will be added Claret, Pale Ale, Stout and Water playing out of the head of the barrel when it is in the pulley".

Not even the London season can revive such nights. But there are buildings that those of previous generations would recognize. Hatchards is one. It is roughly 150 years since its founder paid £31 10s. for the goodwill and £40 for the rent of No. 173, and launched out as a bookseller, primed by the training received from the eminent Tom Payne. There were two further changes . . . to No. 190 in 1801, and later to No. 187. But the continuity has persisted. The original Hatchard graced his shop with taste. His appearance . . . "invariably dressed in black. His coat was of the style of a Bishop's frock-coat, waistcoat buttoning to the throat with an entirely plain front, and knee-breeches and gaiters" . . . must have blended with the background of sere volumes, oil lamps, and a clientele of innumerable celebrities, such as Zachary Macaulay with his little son, the future historian, searching for the book suggested by Hannah More, who, as a girl, longed "to go to London to see Bishops and booksellers".

Hatchards was more than a bookshop. It was an institution. The Royal Horticultural Society came into existence on its premises. Among other societies was one of more specialized interest . . . the Outinian. This was a group of men and women banded together with an avowed objective . . . the promotion of marriages. Their gatherings were fortified by tea and buns, and specific enquiries were followed by investigations into the private affairs of the contracting parties. At the outset of his career, Hatchard specialized in the publication of pamphlets. It is interesting to read Sydney Smith's comment in this connection which appeared in the *Edinburgh Review* of 1810: "There is a set of well-dressed, prosperous gentlemen who assemble daily at Mr. Hatchard's shop, clean, civil personages, well in with the people in power, delighted with every existing circumstance, and every now and then one of these personages writes a little book, and the rest praise that little book, expecting to be praised in their turn for their own little books, and of these little books thus written by these clean, civil personages so expecting to be praised, the pamphlet before us appears to be one." Like the importunate widow, such individuals are still with us.

Piccadilly is haunted by memories. The Albany with the literary shades of Byron writing "Lara" in Lord Althorpe's





chambers. Macaulay poring over his history. Gladstone preparing his speeches. Bulwer Lytton completing his novels. The faint echo of the Christy Minstrels coming from the St. James's Hall, which stood where now is the Piccadilly Hotel. The restored Church of St. James, legacy of Sir Christopher Wren, recalls those eighteenth-century days when it was the most fashionable church in London. Defoe records that a convenient seat cost more than a chair at a play, because "all the beauty and quality comes there". Somewhere beneath its shadow lies the mortal remains of Charles Cotton, the scribe and friend of Izaak Walton. Fortnum and Mason at first glance hardly suggests antiquity, yet, in point of age, it is older than Hatchards. Stewart's also has the imprimatur of the years. Burlington House is the guardian of the

Sciences. The Royal Academy, graduating from Somerset House and part of the National Gallery, is known to a large public. Here also is the home of learned Societies appreciated by a limited coterie. The Royal Society is one. Founded by Charles II with the intention of "the improving of natural knowledge", the wishes of the founder have been observed to the extent of Dr. Wollaston's famous analysis of a lady's tear which he captured on her cheek. History is silent as to how it was induced.

Of all the figures associated with Piccadilly, the most forceful was Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, Lord Chancellor of Ireland. Few characters in English history have been so dominating. He defied the House of Commons, browbeat the King, and overruled the State. Arrogant and avaricious, Clarendon's ambitions were fired by the secret marriage of his daughter to the Duke of York, which made it possible that his grandchild might one day rule the country. His nature was mirrored in Clarendon House, an extravagant mansion which he built where now is Albemarle Street. The sailing of the Dutch up the Thames marked his fall. Popular feeling was against him. A mob besieged his house in June 1667. Pepys records: "they have cut down the trees before his house and broke his windows, and a gibbet either set up before or painted upon his gate, and these three words writ: 'Three sights to be seen, Dunkirk, Tangier, and a barren Queen.'"

The house perished soon after its owner. On 18th September, 1673, Evelyn "walked to survey the sad demolition of Clarendon House". It was sold to the highest bidder, and Evelyn continued: "it fell to certain rich bankers and mechanics, who gave for it and the ground about it £35,000; they design as it were a new town, and a most magnificent piazza". The prime-mover behind the purchase was Sir Thomas Bond of Peckham, Comptroller of the Household to the Queen Mother, Henrietta Maria, and a loyal supporter of Charles II. Bond drew up plans for building on the site. Thus came into existence Grafton Street, Dover Street, Albemarle Street, and Bond Street . . . that narrow thoroughfare of pretty faces, elegant clothes and well-groomed windows, which still lives up to the reputation given by Hatton in 1708 as "a fine new street mostly inhabited by nobility and gentry".

There is much that might be written . . . of the glories that

once were Devonshire House . . . of pleasures more ebullient than ours. Piccadilly has been London to successive generations. It still is. The effervescence of Piccadilly at night . . . a touch of perfume . . . the blue smoke of a cigar . . . the feverish epileptic lights . . . and the spell returns.

## DEER STALKING OF THE STREAM

ANGLING is a sport that can claim in Britain at least half-a-million enthusiasts. It is therefore more than likely that at some time during the ten weeks' duration of the Season the temptation will be great to slip away to the "luxuriant water-meadows animated by insect, bird and plant life" as described by the late Lord Grey of Falloden. Once again it will be necessary to go further afield. Fish are no longer caught in the Thames much below Richmond, and it is difficult to realize that less than a century ago the river, from its source to its mouth, was an angler's paradise. London was a fishing centre. The Strand really lived up to its name. The river bank was a strand where fishing was not only a sport, but professional fishermen made a living. It is recorded in 1810 that a single haul of the net off Wandsworth produced a dozen salmon. If salmon fishing is wanted, I suggest a visit to that most peaceful of English rivers, the Hampshire Avon that flows from near Devizes to the English Channel at Christchurch. The choice could not be better, for did not Izaak Walton say "the salmon is accounted the king of fresh-water fish, and is ever bred in rivers relating to the sea, yet so high or far from it as admits of no tincture of salt, or brackishness . . ."

Now piscatorial enthusiasm can be exasperating to a non-angler who is tempted to be cynical about a rustic sport which originally was dependent on a piece of string, a bent pin, and a village stream. No amount of lyricism can make a fish other than a fish . . . all look the same on a slab. Such thoughts are sacrilege to an angler. It is the sport not the gastronomic aftermath that matters. In that sense the salmon fishing season becomes the deer stalking of the stream. The description is apt, the experience unique, for the salmon is the king of freshwater fish. Unless the moment has been experienced, it is difficult to describe in words the muscular and mental tension when a salmon is first hooked . . . the screeching of the reel as the fish with a burst of speed leaps in the air and turns downstream . . . the playing and the landing. They are exquisite moments which are first possible for

those hardy enough to brave Arctic conditions. I have known days in February when the reel line has become a solid mass of ice whilst the rings through which the line passes to the rod-point were choked with ice. At times the fly needed thawing in the mouth, whilst an ice fringe of the river edge had to be broken. Salmon fishing at the beginning of the season can be a test of endurance, a mere apology of the sport that now waits for us. The river should be in good volume and the sport better. There is more satisfaction in a lively ten-pound springer in May than killing in late autumn several heavy gravid fish that move sluggishly when hooked.

But there is more to a salmon than hooking it. Scientific observation has revealed several interesting facts about the mystery of the migration of salmon from the deep sea to the rivers. They come in groups according to age and size. The largest and oldest fish come in autumn and winter. I have seen them more than a yard in length and weighing about forty pounds, their scales showing them to be five to six years old. Groups of smaller fish, mostly four-year-olds, weighing between twelve and twenty-four pounds and roughly twenty to thirty inches long, follow in the early spring. In summer there is only a sprinkling of fish, almost all male and weighing between six and seven pounds. Whatever their size and weight, all are heading for the same goal . . . all have been stirred by the same impulse to desert the deep sea, where they have been feeding, and to make their way through the strange, hostile waters of fresh rivers, up to the highest source.

This impulse that urges them upwards towards the mountains makes them surmount seemingly insuperable difficulties. It is well known how salmon will leap repeatedly at falls and cascades. The impulse is extraordinary—there seem to be stipulated times that are observed by the salmon up and down the river. I have watched this urge satisfied at irregular intervals. The fish leaps almost vertically from the water and hits the surface with a resounding smack on its side or back. I have even seen a salmon ricochet across the surface of a pool. Just before evening rising-time the salmon become extremely active. Watch the neck of a pool and you frequently see a V-shaped ripple of a salmon swimming at considerable speed. Even after dusk has merged into night I have heard the splash of a salmon jumping as it returns to the water.

Quite often this activity is due to lack of oxygen in the water since aeration in a river is vital. There is more oxygen at the head and tail of a fast-running stream. This is particularly noticeable when a definite course is followed every year in the ascent of the rivers. Where tributaries join the main streams, the fish have no hesitation at the dividing of the waters. One course is always chosen. The determining factor is the water most rich in oxygen. On this long and arduous journey the salmon need rapid and intense metabolism. Increased oxygen in the water such as is found in foaming eddies stimulates the fish to increased activity.

Much could be written about this journey to the spawning beds where there is scarcely sufficient water to cover them. The subsequent history of the fishlets is just as interesting. For two summers they remain in the mountain streams where they were born. They are then about seven inches long with bronze backs marked with black and grey sides flecked with varying blue patches. The smolts begin their journey downstream to the sea in leisurely fashion with a period at the river's mouth to get used to the salt water. Then swimming into deeper waters, they go over the Continental Shelf into the dark, lightless regions of the ocean. What happens after that is mere speculation. Salmon are very rarely caught after they leave the rivers. The period is about three to four years, their life probably being confined to the middle depths of three to four thousand feet, which, though devoid of light, are exceptionally rich in animal life. There are swarms of crustaceans and the flesh of the salmon takes its familiar colour from the pigmentation of shrimp carapaces.

In the darkness their gustatory and auditory sensations are more than satisfied. Then comes the extraordinary impulse that cannot be denied . . . the urge to change their mode of life from saline to fresh water. The geography of the river bank is unknown. The only outward guide is the oxygenated water. The long journey calls for excessive vitality and energy with resulting exhaustion that frequently causes death. There is much to be discovered about these seasonal impulses in migratory animals.

There are many other unsolved mysteries about the depths of a river. A debatable question is whether fish can taste. The possibility is decried by those who point out that the majority of fish swallow their food immediately it reaches the mouth. Against, it can be argued that the characteristic is due to their

mouths having to be opened and shut continuously when breathing, whilst the walls of the throat could have organs of taste. This is pure speculation. What is certain is that fish have a keen sense of smell. In 1653, Izaak Walton wrote: "And now I shall tell you that which may be called a secret. I have been a-fishing with old Oliver Henly, now with God, a noted fisher for trout and salmon . . . but he has been observed, both by others and myself, to catch more fish than I, or any other body . . . especially salmons . . . the box in which he put these worms was anointed with a drop, or two or three, of oil of ivy berries . . . by the worms remaining in that box an hour, or a like time, they had incorporated a kind of smell that was irresistibly attractive . . . to force any fish . . . to bite." Many arguments can be put forward to support the contention. Wasp grubs are a delicacy to roach; chub find it difficult to ignore a piece of ripe cheese. Bream are attracted by ground bait that has brewer's grain or oil cake. An experiment was carried out with water that had been flavoured with worms. It was poured into a tank containing fish which immediately became active in search of food.

The question whether fish can hear is one that produces conflicting theories. It is true that fish possess no external evidence of the organs of hearing, but comparative anatomists have found in fish the most delicate organs for the detection of sound. Experiments are somewhat contradictory. A gun fired immediately above fish had no effect, but fish have been known to collect to be fed whenever a bell is rung. Strike a tuning-fork and invariably fish react. Objects beaten together under the water left fish undisturbed, yet a stone rolling into the water will scatter them immediately. A general belief is that fish can sense low but not high vibrations, and are unable to distinguish tones.

Such thoughts and theories do not deter the angler for long. It is enough to know that the salmon are waiting to be caught . . . and the Wye fish has yet to be beaten. It was fifty-nine and a half inches long by thirty-three and a quarter inches, and weighed eighty pounds.

## A MILD PUB CRAWL

A MILD pub crawl in London can be quite pleasant provided you know beforehand the sort of pub you want. There is no lack of choice for London still has about 4,000 "locals". To reduce these to roughly fifty requires considerable sharpening of taste, and for our purpose I propose to limit the range to those that offer associations of historical, architectural, or unusual interest plus the reasonable certainty of good company.

*The Grenadier* in Wilton Crescent Mews is tucked away from the main stream of traffic, an exclusive mews-village "local", which once served as a billet for the Duke of Wellington's officers. The enquiring stranger is told that the Duke was a regular customer, the claim being backed up with his mounting-block outside. The tradition may well be true for the ground now occupied by the attractive mews houses was formerly a cavalry barracks until midway through the last century. The *Antelope* in Eaton Terrace is another fashionable pub, a trifle self-conscious of the Bohemian days of Augustus John and Philip Heseltine when it was the Dome and Rotonde. It is now a meeting-ground for Belgravia. *The Duke of Albemarle* close to Dover Street has a curious relic in the bar, a street name tablet engraved "This is Stafford Street" and dated 1686. The *Intrepid Fox* in Wardour Street has nothing to do with the thrills of the hunt. It is named after Charles James Fox, who claimed among his supporters Sam House, the worthy landlord of this inn, and a bas-relief on the wall shows this publican giving free beer to all who had voted for Fox. Appearances can be deceptive, for in Kensington, on the corner of Church Street, is an attractive pub sign called *Ye Civet Cat*, but the thirsty traveller who tries to get a drink will find that the building is a bank. When the inn was demolished the Council stipulated that the sign should remain. Comfort is personified in the *Trevor Arms* in Knightsbridge, a favourite haunt of Life Guard officers. *Shepherd's* in Shepherd Market is likewise carpeted and attractively lit, so much so that it almost ceases to be a pub. For a complete contrast *The Yorkshire Stingo* on the Marylebone





Road is a true-to-type pub. It was from here that London's first omnibus started. The pioneer of this mode of transport was George Shillibeer, who brought the idea from Paris. The enterprise began on 4th July, 1829, the fare to the Bank being one shilling, a sum that also included a glance at a newspaper.

If handsome pub signs are of interest then *The Castle* on the High Street in Battersea should be seen, for it claims to have the most magnificent inn sign in London. The claim is probably right, the Elizabethan wood carving being particularly impressive. Fleet Street offers several pubs of historic fame. *The Cock* used to be on the opposite side of the street, but it was pulled down in 1886. Happily the James I chimney-piece was saved and incorporated in the present structure. Tradition maintains that the carved sign was the work of Grinling Gibbons. *The Cheshire Cheese* is more or less as it was when rebuilt after the Great Fire. It is known as one of Doctor Johnson's favourite taverns, and contains a chair, originally in the *Mitre*, alleged to have been used regularly by the old Doctor. As he used to live in Gough Square, which is only a stone's throw, the tradition is probably true, though Boswell, usually meticulous in his observations, is silent on this point. Bride Lane contains another old tavern, *The Old Bell*, which was also built after the Great Fire, tradition this time maintaining that it was frequented exclusively by the men employed by Wren in the rebuilding of the nearby St. Bride's.

*Dirty Dick's* in Bishopsgate is a pub with a tradition that may well be a legend. The showplace is the bar downstairs which is shrouded in cobwebs and dirt. The story is that Dirty Dick, or to give him his real name, Nathaniel Bentley, was a foppish young man whose life was changed by a tragedy. On the eve of his wedding the bride-to-be died. Such was his grief that he ceased to take any interest in his personal appearance. He became filthy. His clothes turned into rags. He refused to alter the room which contained all the wedding preparations. When he died in Scotland in 1809, the room yielded its secrets that had the dust and cobwebs of forty years on them. It is claimed that most of the contents were shifted to this tavern. The contention is open to doubt, but the fact remains that the appearance today is unique. Further afield *The Spaniards* in Hampstead is one of the pleasantest old pubs in London, and if the night is warm you can drink in the garden. The whole place feels really old with its toll-house and

interior with a vintage atmosphere. How it derived its name is open to conjecture. One tradition points to a stone effigy and says that it is to the memory of a young man who was killed in a duel. The place was owned by two Spanish brothers who quarrelled over a girl with the resulting tragedy. It may be true, but the odds are that the origin is more prosaic for the site was once occupied by the house of a Spanish Ambassador to the Court of James I.

For authentic atmosphere the *Lamb and Flag* in Rose Street, near Covent Garden, lives up to expectations. It has an alley entrance and the whole place is dwarfed into insignificance by towering warehouses. The interior is true to type . . . the rough, oak-grained alehouse air, quite in keeping with the prize-fights of Dickens's day for which it was known. Attempts have been made to associate the Lamb sign with the Holy Lamb symbol of Middle Temple from the fact that the landlord had formerly worked there as a servant, but the link sounds weak. If you want to see something of the glitter of the Gin Palace, a visit to the *Salisbury* in St. Martin's Lane ought to satisfy your longing. A famous riverside pub is *The Dove*, on the Upper Mall, Hammersmith, which is ideal for an open-air drink on a June evening. At one time it was part of the house next door, and history associates it with James Thomson, the author of *Rule, Britannia*. When the building was made into two houses, No. 17 was converted into a smoking retreat for the Duke of Sussex, Queen Victoria's uncle. The sign-board advertises *The Doves*, but the licence shows that the original and correct name is in the singular. *The George and Vulture* in Cornhill is another tavern with historic associations. Unfortunately it was destroyed by fire in 1748 and later rebuilt. Its links with Dickensian incidents has resulted in it being made the headquarters of the Pickwick Club. Not far away in Ball Court is Simpson's Chop-House, one of the finest examples of an eighteenth-century eating establishment. On the score of antiquity *Ye Hoop and Grapes* in Aldgate maintains that it is London's oldest licensed house, and the records certainly indicate an existence of over three hundred years, though only as an inn for roughly a century. Before that it was a vintners.

Another contrast can be had by sampling the pubs in dock-land and the East End, with plenty of sawdust and scrubbed deal. *The Prospect of Whitby* in Wapping Wall has plenty of



atmosphere with its Chianti bottles, skulls, assegais, and old pistols. It is better to go upstairs and sit on a balcony on which you can drink your beer and watch the barges sail down the tide. Then in Limehouse you find *The Grapes* which has been recognized as the *Six Jolly Fellowship Porters* of "Our Mutual Friend". It is only small and the rooms have sawdust on the floor. The back room has a miniature balcony from which we can watch the river traffic. *The Anchor* on Bankside is an extremely attractive Georgian inn which Doctor Johnson on occasions used to

patronize. *The Gun* on Cold Harbour, Poplar, is another pub with a river view from the terrace and a tradition that Nelson was a regular visitor. The presence of Lady Hamilton's house close by makes the story quite probable. *The Spread Eagle and Crown* in Rotherhithe Street offers an interesting and rare example of an unspoilt exterior, a traditional early tavern façade. The pub has a licence to sell postage stamps, the reason being that many seamen cannot get to a post office during their spell on shore. Carey Street has a pub alleged to have been built in 1602. *The Seven Stars* has been identified with the *Magpie and Stump* of "Pickwick Papers". *The Castle* in Cowcross Street by Holborn Viaduct has an unusual distinction for it is the only pub in England that is a pawnbroker's shop at the same time. The reason for this privilege is bound up with the tradition that George IV, having lost heavily over wagers at a cock-fight held in the vicinity, was obliged to pledge his watch with the landlord, who, in return, was granted this right, and the customer is asked to believe that the three brass balls that hang in the bar are those originally granted by the king.

So much can be written about the pubs of London . . . their infinite variety appeals to every taste among the eight million potential customers of Greater London.

## HOLIDAY GOLF

A NOTICE pinned in the office of the *Westminster Gazette* by order of Mr. J. A. Spender carried the words that failure "must not be imputed to cricketers as proof of moral obliquity". The phrase reminds me of an earlier remark by Horace Hutchinson in his *Hints on Golf* published in 1888: "Try to remember that a person may be a most indifferent golfer and yet be a good Christian gentleman, and in some respects worthy of your esteem." Such generous criticism is doubtless the right way to approach the subject of holiday golf, the light-hearted variety so popular during the Season. There is certainly no shortage of choice, for the list is more than 2,000 strong. If you are reluctant to go far afield nothing could be pleasanter than a day's golf at Sunningdale or Walton Heath or Moor Park or one of the many delightful courses within easy reach of London. Enthusiasm may persuade you to sample the genuine seaside variety, in which case that rich corner of Kent containing Royal St. George's, Princes, and Deal is the obvious place. Sandwich offers glorious natural golfing country with Nature as the architect. Here is solitude without loneliness. In the past Kent has been noted for its cherries, hops, cricket, apples, Dickens, and pretty girls. All these must be taken into consideration, but it is an omission to leave out golf in the ranking. The quality and variety is on a par with anything this country can offer.

Those historically-minded will find additional interest on the St. Augustine's links at Ebbsfleet. Close to the clubhouse stands a runic cross of stone which tradition declares marks the place where St. Augustine set foot on English soil and met King Ethelbert. Near to the fifth green is a little spring of clear water which is known as *St. Augustine's Well*, which legend holds appeared miraculously to slake the Saint's thirst. Every year this site is the scene of the pilgrimage headed by the Warden of St. Augustine's College, Canterbury, who, in his role of Bishop-Knight, kneels by the spring to drink the water.

It would be possible to make a lengthy list of the courses within reach of London, but there is much to be said for being more ambitious. The night train from King's Cross can carry your sleeping form across the length of England, over the invisible Border into a country where rivers become burns and rolls are baps. Once in Scotland and the range of choice becomes embarrassing, but none can compare with the tradition that belongs to St. Andrews. The Old Course has its critics, but without hesitation I would name it as the finest test of golf in these islands. It has everything that a golfer can want. What Lord's is to cricket, and the Jockey Club to racing, so the Royal and Ancient Golf Club stands as the supreme arbitrator of the fairways.

You will find St. Andrews as grey and speckled as a piece of homespun tweed, probably quite different to what you expect. Before you arrive the prospect of a town given over to golf and golfers may sound too specialized even for your taste. There is something about female golfers that many people find terrifying. I admit that I have always cherished the assumption that women should act and appear like women. If a girl looks a cross between Ava Gardner and Jane Russell, the odds are that she has something better to do than tramp miles round a golf course. Sex equality in golf has a habit of trying to improve on nature, but the result is not always successful. The hotel at teatime will probably confirm our fears. Men talk golf and bulky women sports tweeds and stout shoes.

But St. Andrews is a town of many associations. The experience of exchanging St. Andrews the home of golf for St. Andrews the ecclesiastical capital of Scotland is like passing through gates into a rather thoughtful world, a world of charm that is still living spiritually in the eighteenth century. The candles are not burnt out. I went to the tower of St. Rule and climbed the damp, spiral steps in solid blackness infested by expostulating pigeons. From the lead roof I could just see the Lomond Hills of Fife by Loch Leven and the Sidlaw Hills beyond Dundee. In the distance the Old Course looked painfully narrow. Below sprawled the ruined cathedral, once a jewel of pointed Gothic, now a stone skeleton with shadowy aisles and broken columns, a memorial to the iconoclastic passion of John Knox, who destroyed the fabric, but left the memory of a ruined altar . . . an altar before

which James V and Mary of Guise were married, a union that gave Mary Stuart to her people.

There below was the Haunted Tower on the Abbey Wall, the custodian of strange rumours: the Pends, originally the entrance to the Priory, now dignified in decay: the grey buildings of Scotland's oldest university: streets sprinkled with students in scarlet gowns, many heading for the rough-and-ready shop that serves such excellent coffee. I thought of the Castle. If stones can retain the impress of tragedy, here is ground more cursed than the Haunted Tower. The gloom of the Bottle Dungeon almost echoes to the groans of victims. In contrast, I thought of a tiny room overlooking a peaceful garden, furnished as it must have been when Mary, Queen of Scots, weary of Court intrigue, came for rest and peace. It does not require a sensitive imagination to conceive what sad thoughts must have been released in this tiny chamber with its recessed window and enclosed little bed surmounted with a simple crucifix. Mary Stuart is an enigma. Her portraits show that beauty of feature was not her charm, yet as a young woman she exercised a powerful attraction over men. It would be true to say that those to whom she yielded were unworthy of her, being either vicious or weak. One fact is indisputable. Mary Stuart, Queen Regnant of Scotland, was a lonely woman. Only in St. Andrews did she become like any other young girl. I found the atmosphere of phantasy still preserved, for this closet of Royal memories is now part of the library of a girls' school.

But to return to the real reason for our visit, the game of golf, I found, even in the cathedral kirkyard, golfing associations in the form of two unique monuments. One preserves the carved bewhiskered features of Allan Robertson with the emblems of his trade as ball-maker in the town a century ago, whilst John Rhind, the Edinburgh sculptor, created a life-like figure of Young Tom Morris showing the famous golfer addressing a ball with his favourite cleek. If either Robertson or Morris could come back to life they would feel quite at home once the Old Course was reached. They would locate familiar landmarks like the Elysian Fields, the Valley of Sin, Granny Clark's Wynd, Hell Bunker, the Road Hole, the Principal's Nose, and the possibility of a glass of beer at the Ginger-beer Hole.

Another feature of the Old Course which the visitor finds



unusual is the enormous size of the double greens. The reason can be traced back to the last century when the course was much narrower owing to an arrangement by which there was only one hole on each green, the same hole being used both outward and inward. The system worked on the understanding that the match first to reach the green should hole-out before the players from the opposite direction arrived. The method became impracticable when the number of players increased. Proposals were put forward to make a circular course by extending fairways round the other side of the links. The scheme was rejected. A second plan was adopted whereby two distinct greens were made parallel to one another, a move that increased the breadth of the course by two-thirds.

Tradition lingers long at St. Andrews. One custom known to generations of golfers necessitates getting up when the dew is still on the grass, but even at such an early hour a crowd jostles on the terrace of the Royal and Ancient Club. Suddenly conversation stops. There is activity on the first teeing-ground. A glistening white ball is teed-up. An elderly man steps forward and takes a practice swing. Long-handicap golfers suffer with him, for he is not necessarily a good golfer. He takes his stance. A swish of a club and the ball should sail down the fairways as a ceremonial cannon is fired. No sooner has the ball landed than it disappears under a heap of struggling figures. One detaches itself, trots back, golf ball in hand, to receive his reward—a gold sovereign or its equivalent. The new captain of the Royal and Ancient Golf Club has played himself into office.

To my eyes, St. Andrews never alters. In the shadow of the Royal and Ancient clubhouse, the names and deeds of former champions seem as fresh as if they had just walked off the last green. The scene is so familiar, almost timeless, with the white rails . . . men smoking an evening pipe as they watch the players trickle in . . . Old Tom Morris's low-ceilinged shop . . . the terrace that has known so many exciting moments. Even for a visit of short duration, it is well worth the effort of an all-night journey to get to know the home of golf.

## DERBY DAY

WE ARE apt in our indolent English manner to take Derby Day for granted. It is a mistake because this race is unique in the year of sport, even though the ingredients remain the same. Each year we come near to suffocation in the sprawling ant-heap of humanity. The official attendance is usually in the region of 500,000 . . . an impressive figure, but mute when it comes to atmosphere and types. The fashionable enclosures are no guide. They only touch the hem. To get the best out of the Derby, you want to sink your identity on the free side of the course. Never mind the tiered stands. You can have your fill of these at Ascot. Exchange champagne for lemonade by the quart and jellied eels. Mingle with the crowds that swarm across the Downs. You soon find that the exotic dresses on the fashionable side of the rails are not the only ones to be worn with pride. The colours are as exaggerated as if touched by the brush of Frith. It is a caricaturist's dream.

By any standard the scene is bizarre. Tipsters prancing about with dramatic gesture. Hoarse-voiced bookies on their flimsy scaffolds. The voice of the crowd is deafening. The tempo is determined by the clock. As the minute hand draws nearer to the big race, the pandemonium reaches a fresh crescendo. The atmosphere reeks of beer and bodies. The stands are like quivering patterns of animated life. In ten minutes the name of the winner will be engraved out of uncertainty in the records. The tension becomes tangible as the ribbon of colour, maybe thirty-odd strong, gradually takes shape. The sweep of Tattenham Corner is the ideal place to catch the outline of crouching jockeys in vivid silks sweeping along like a wave. For a moment a chestnut holds the lead with smooth sweeping strides, but the order quickly changes as the horses enter the straight. The bedlam of sound gradually takes shape and the winner is known. The race takes about two minutes, thirty-odd seconds. It is remarkable to think that such a brief span of time can attain such importance in the

minds and lives of hundreds of thousands of people scattered all over the world.

It is small wonder that roughly seventy years ago Henry James reacted as he did to the scene. He was describing the America which formed the background of his fellow-countryman, Nathaniel Hawthorne, when he was a youth. And he drew up a list of the things that Hawthorne missed and his country then lacked. It begins with a State, includes church, universities, cathedrals, palaces, court, and ends with "No Epsom, nor Ascot". This shrewd onlooker realized that behind the traditions and flimsy façade of convention, Epsom and the Derby form an essential part of the national life of England. Today they certainly rank as outstanding hours in the crowded calendar of the Season.

Each year it is tempting to think of that particular Derby as outstanding and of special significance. On the other hand, honesty compels the admission that over 170 Derby Days have more than had their quota of incident and excitement. Every year people spend the night on the Downs in cars, tents and caravans. The traffic congestion is tackled by mobile police patrols, some 2,000 uniformed men being mobilized to control the crowds. That is now the accepted pattern. But think for a moment of the Edwardian Derby Day. The pattern was similar, with certain differences. Four-in-hands driven by military-looking men in bold check trousers. Landaus, brakes, chaises, gigs, brightly-painted dog-carts. Cockney costers on their mokes. Such was the traffic in Edwardian days. At night the King entertained the Jockey Club at the Palace. John Corlett led his string of seventeen hansoms from one public-house to another. Piccadilly and Haymarket echoed to the sound of festivities. Derby Night was something to remember.

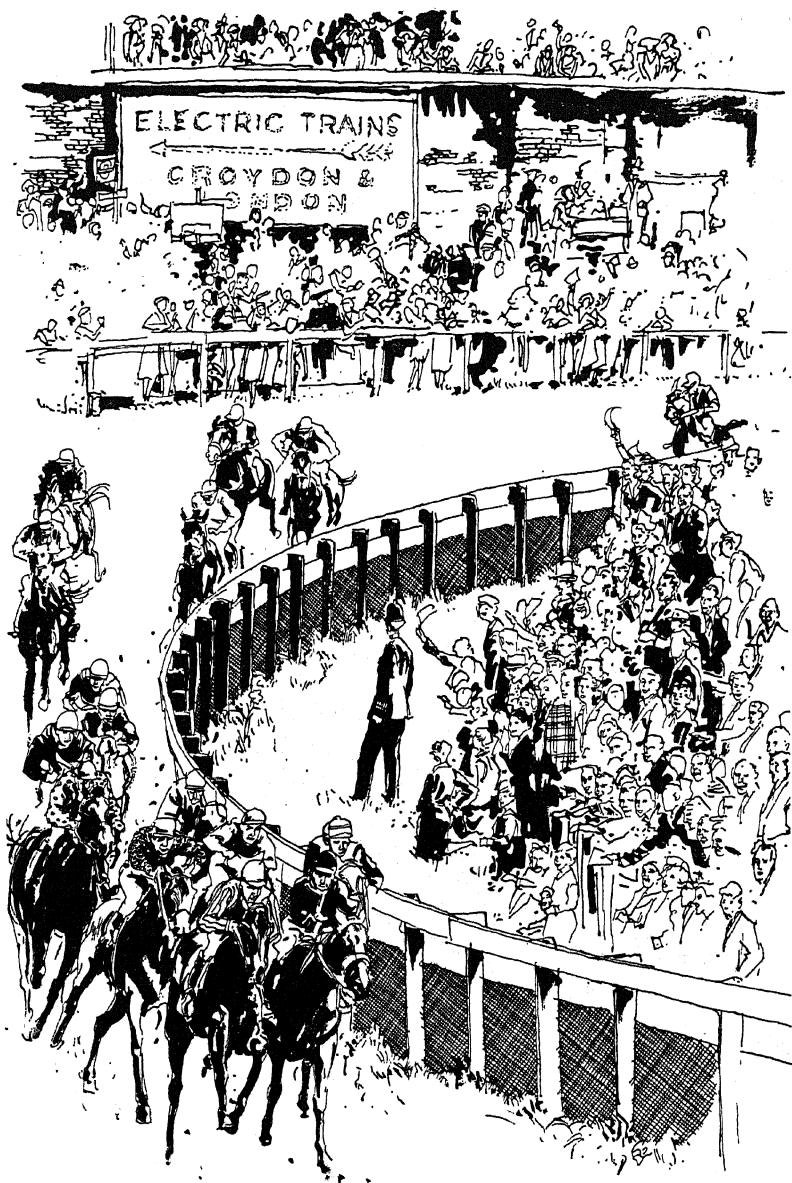
Even more memorable must have been that May day in 1780 when the race was inaugurated. The setting was post-chaise and cabriolet with a blending of cambric, quizzing glasses, quivering fans and powdered heads. It was indeed a fashionable gathering, fitting support to Edward Smith Stanley, twelfth Earl of Derby, who had decided, over a glass of after-dinner port, that it would be amusing to run a race for three-year-olds and call it the Derby, in the same way that he had inaugurated the Oaks in 1779, the name being derived from his shooting-box at Woodmansterne.

I can find no list that records the horses entered for the first

Derby, although history confirms that nine horses cantered to the starting-post. We know, further, that the race was won by a horse called *Diomed*, owned by that sporting squire of Suffolk, Sir Charles Bunbury, of Mildenhall. He sold the horse in 1798, then twenty-one years old, to an American for fifty guineas. *Diomed* was later re-sold to Colonel John Hoome, of Virginia. The influence of this horse on the American thoroughbred at stud was immense. He died at the age of thirty-one years. I always read his obituary with quiet amusement: "There was almost as much mourning in the old colony at his demise as there was at the death of George Washington. The Virginians regarded the death of *Diomed* as a great national catastrophe." I can only assume that the Virginians were either exceptional horse-lovers or else a trifle shaky over their national history.

We know other things about that first Derby Day. The twelfth Earl, for instance, was enthusiastic about cock-fighting, so much so that it was said he used to have a cock-pit made in a drawing-room. The breed of game-cock that he raised at Knowsley were noted for their fighting spirit. One of the rival attractions at the inaugural Derby was a main of cocks between the combined birds of Middlesex and Surrey against the birds of the gentlemen of Wiltshire. Unfortunately I have been unable to verify the result.

It would be wrong, however, to infer that horse-racing at Epsom began with the Derby. There is a reference to a race-meeting as far back as 1648, whilst there are many allusions to racing in the reigns of Charles, William III and Mary, Queen Anne and the early Georges, until the time of George III when the meetings at Epsom became linked with the Derby. Looking in this way through the records it is possible to trace a common routine-pattern. Eleven o'clock marked the beginning of racing, followed by an interval at one o'clock for lunch in town, after which the racing programme would continue for a couple more hours. Several unusual incidents are recorded, among them a peculiar one that happened at the 1766 October Meeting: "A curious accident befell the Jockey who rode the winner of the Sweepstakes. Just before he came in at the Winning-Post, being crossed by a gentleman on horseback, the rider was thrown, but his leg hanging in the stirrup, the horse of course carried his weight in, and won miraculously without hurting his rider." It



The sweep of Tattenham Corner is the ideal place to catch the outline of crouching jockeys in vivid silks sweeping along like a wave



is somewhat reminiscent of an incident that took place in the 1952 Derby. The second horse, *Gay Time*, threw its jockey, Lester Piggott, just after passing the winning-post. The jockey had to return to the unsaddling enclosure minus horse and saddle. A stable boy rode the horse back.

Isolating any single Derby for special mention is difficult, but if choice has to be made that of 1840 has much to commend it. That year Queen Victoria attended the race for the first time with the Prince Consort, a gesture that acted like a tonic, for there was a danger of the sport languishing. From that moment racing became fashionable. Disraeli referred to it as the "Blue Riband of the Turf". Parliament adjourned to watch it. During the Crimea the winner was inserted in General Orders. The Derby has had imitators, but none has carried the same appeal . . . it is still unique . . . with patronage ranging from monarch to coster.

## HAUNTED STONES

THE passing of the great English house is a saddening spectacle. For centuries these mansions have mirrored with dignity a traditional aspect of English life, in theory the real background for the wit and beauty of the Season. Unfortunately, soon only a memory will be left . . . a memory of sweeping lawns, softly swaying trees, gravel paths skirting shaded pools where half-open water lilies court the sun, the tip of a steeple peering through the foliage, a huddle of cottages, the village street, rolling fields beyond, and, presiding over all, a stately house of grey-tinted stone, whose continuity of ownership is reflected in the monuments that lie in the churchyard.

The setting has remained the same from generation to generation. The village is still a miniature microcosm of English life, but the centralizing influence is absent. The last remaining relic of communal feudalism is passing. Economic factors, born in that calamitous summer of 1879, are hastening the end. Where once was dignity is now dereliction. Lawns are overgrown with weeds. Carriage drives are brown with leaf-mould. The copse is a wilderness of damp weeds, briars, and fallen branches. A stricken elm has left a gap in the boundary wall. The lodge is closed. The shutters are up at the house. Rooms that echoed to laughter are silent and darkened. The soul has been torn from its body. Even if the patronizing hand of the State injects a form of activity within its walls, the atmosphere will still be lifeless. There will be lacking the pulsating blood of men and women, who are proud of their inheritance and conscious of the responsibilities it carries—the scamper of children—the bustle of servants—activity in the kitchens—the clumsy step of labourers from the fields—the voices of tenant farmers. Nationalized museum pieces can be but empty shells. The house is dead.

It is difficult when looking at those that remain—and there are several within easy reach of London that well repay a visit—to realize the part that the great house has played in our national



life. It has an organic relationship with the English countryside and is the expression of a gradual development that has roots in the soil. The very names are incantations of the richness in the tradition . . . Penshurst Place in Kent, Hatfield House some twenty miles from London, Sutton Place near Guildford, Luton Hoo in Bedfordshire, Knole just outside Sevenoaks . . . the list could be lengthy. The words are an inducement to know something of the lives of those who once lived in these vast mansions; their mannerisms, tastes and foibles; the hands that designed the initial outline of their magnificence; their evolution to the fullness of maturity.

The system can be traced through many centuries. The word "Hall" has a long history. It was known to the Domesday commissioners—"The land belonged to our brothers, but there was only one Hall." The Domesday Book also outlines the manorial organization of lord, villein, cottar, and bordar; free man and socman. The manor, during the Norman Conquest, indicated a unit of land. It belonged either to the Crown, the Church, or ordinary landowner. The focal point of each manor was its manor-house, occupied by the lord of the manor or his bailiff. The house was not nearly so impressive as its name suggests. It consisted of one building of stone—the Hall—surrounded by earth-constructed farm buildings thatched with straw. In time these disappeared, leaving only the Norman hall, like the hall of Oakham Castle in Rutland, built by Walkelin du Ferrers about 1180. These buildings mark the line of cleavage between the impregnable castle and the benevolent country house.

It is interesting to note some of the stages in the transition. The Tudor period offers numerous instances of ingenious methods by which luxury and light replaced the austere gloom of Norman architecture. Craftsmen plied their skill with effect. Fortified strength was softened by filled-up moats which became masses of flowers. Windows were enlarged. Creature comforts were studied. The spirit of the Renaissance inspired the touch of the carver, silversmith and stonemason. The birth of the Season brought many changes. It started on a militant note in the reign of Charles I as an outward protest by women who were weary of country life. They journeyed to London with their husbands and flaunted their fashions in Hyde Park. The change must have been

limited for amusements were scarce. There was the village of Charing, the May fair-ground, fields galore, the West End did not exist, and the city gates were closed at sunset. The spirited rebellion was met by an authoritative pronouncement, inspired by the King, that the bored women were to return to their country houses. The order was reluctantly obeyed. Their inclinations received more encouragement at the Restoration. Reaction to Puritanism saw Charles II launch a wave of frivolities that drew the country squire and his family to the capital to see and join in the capers. London began to expand. Tastes became more exclusive. The end of the Season saw a migration to the country, and the country house began to reflect something in the town's refinement.

The mutual transference of respective traits was beneficial. The country house commenced to accumulate choice libraries and representative portrait galleries. The lawns and arbours resounded to elegant wit and stimulating talk, and the life of the town began to feel the reciprocal effect of contact with the native robustness of the soil. It became possible to compromise between living in the capital and the remote country. The merchants of London migrated to the lanes outside the town. Defoe, writing in 1722, declared: "Very few of them are the Mansion Houses of families, the Ancient Residences of Ancestors, the Capital Messuages of the Estates; nor have the rich Possessors any Lands to a considerable Value about them. They are Houses of Retreat, Gentlemen's Summer Houses, or Citizen's Country Houses."

The blending of town and country interests was an agreeable fusion. The squire was pleased that his estate had become so widely appreciated and enhanced in value. The town dweller was intoxicated with the possibilities that such new-found freedom of expression offered. Both reactions were reflected by architectural variations in size, shape and embellishment. The delicate lines of Penshurst are alive with memories. It has been a country home since 1340, the owner then being Sir John de Pultney, a wealthy wool merchant who had the distinction of being four times Mayor of London. Edward VI made a present of the house to his Chief Steward and Chamberlain, Sir William Sidney. The latter's son added the King's Tower to the north front, and upon its completion in 1585 he had engraved over the massive doors the following inscription:

"The most Religious and Renowned Prince Edward the sixth, Kinge of England, France and Ireland, gave this House of Pencester with the Mannors, Landes and Appurtenances thereunto belonging unto his Trustye, and wellbeloved servant Syr William Sydney, Knight Banneret, etc., etc."

Sir William was the grandfather of Sir Philip Sidney, the Elizabethan soldier, poet and courtier. When he died of wounds at the siege of Zutphen, the estate passed to his brother, Sir Robert Sidney, who became the Earl of Leicester and Warwick through inheriting the titles of two uncles. From that date the change in ownership went successively from father to son until the chain was broken twice through two eighteenth-century generations going by the female line. Today it is still the abode of the Sidney family.

If we visit Penshurst we shall be impressed by the Barons Hall. This State Room built in 1340 still has the original central open hearth, the smoke escaping through an opening in the roof which is now sealed. The fire-dogs were owned by Sir William Sidney. On each side of the Hall we see fifteenth-century trestle tables at which the retainers had their meals. In the Armoury can be seen the Earl of Leicester's state sword; Sir Philip Sidney's helmet carried at his state funeral; a wristlet-watch worn by Viscount Gort when he won the Victoria Cross in the First World War and given by him to his son-in-law, Lord De L'Isle, who had it on his wrist when he won his Victoria Cross in the Second World War. The wide stairway leads to a gracious Withdrawing Room. In one wall can be seen a peep-hole through which the ladies watched their lords' behaviour in the Hall below. There are so many associations with the past—Queen Elizabeth's Room, the Long Gallery, the Tapestry Room, yet throughout the opening line of Ben Jonson's poem to Penshurst is appropriate:

"Thou art not, Penshurst, built to envious show."

In spite of its vast size, Penshurst is not a place. It is an English home with grey stone and mellow red brick, gables, towers, yews, limes, and velvety lawns.

Then there is Knole, whose servants' quarters once housed a

hundred retainers. It still looks conscious that it has known the double dignity of being a royal palace and the palace of the Archbishop of Canterbury. In fact it is so vast that at no point is it possible to get an uninterrupted view of its entirety. A count shows that it has 365 rooms, 52 staircases and 7 courtyards. Luton Hoo shows an exterior for which Robert Adam was responsible, whilst Capability Brown laid out the park and gardens. Inside is one of the richest collections of objects of art and pictures ever collected by a private individual. The weathered brick façade of Hatfield House is probably the finest example of domestic Tudor architecture in England. Again there is so much to see and absorb, but by far the most human touch can be found in the Long Gallery. In a cabinet is shown a garden hat and a pair of silk stockings. They belonged to Elizabeth, who was sitting under a tree in the park—the tree still stands—when she was given the news of her accession to the throne. Such was the haste of her departure that these relics were left behind, the very first pair of silk stockings ever to have been imported into England. Other places must include the country residence of the Prime Ministers of England at Chequers . . . the influence of Inigo Jones, son of a clockmaker and first of our professional architects, as seen in the Queen's House at Greenwich . . . the neo-Hellenism of Adam . . . the neo-Romanism of Burlington . . . the extravagance of the Gothic Revival . . . the simplicity of many a miniature manor-house. Such are the extremes that embrace the English country-house tradition.

England is unquestionably poorer for the passing of the country house. Our national character has always benefited from individuality and individual enterprise . . . traits that flowered in these gracious dwellings. The influence was not local. It spread beyond the Hall and its pleasant parklands to Westminster and Whitehall. The political life of the nation was never healthier than when it drew sustenance from the country houses of England . . . the meeting ground for town and country, land-owner and citizen, whilst never has the gaiety of the early Season known such a rich and gracious background.

## ETON AND THE FOURTH OF JUNE

FIVE hundred years is a noble span of time, formative centuries that reach back to days when Chaucer was a living memory. As such they form an eloquent commentary on the history of Eton College. And yet that bare statement conveys nothing to me or the casual visitor of the intervening events. I find that a truer perspective is gained by piecing together fragments that give a glimpse of the early Etonian educational pattern as well as something of the changing fashions these stones have known.

The foundation of "the College of the Blessed Mary of Eton near Windsor" coincided with a spate of educational views. The sons of nobility were tutored in different ways. A boy might be entrusted to the charge of an abbot in a monastery. He might receive a threefold tuition in the manor-house—letters by the chaplain, the art of warfare by a family retainer, and field sports by the forester. He might attend the Grammar School with the sons of burghers and yeomen. He might be closeted in a private school. He might be educated as a squire in the King's Court, where the instruction touched upon such subjects as jousting, dancing, field sports, piping, harping, singing, and the technique of amorous approaches. To this catholic interpretation of the principle of education was added the Etonian conception. It began as a small sheltered college of penurious priest-fellows and needy scholars, its range of vision gradually expanding and developing along the progressive lines of a secular "Public School". The fratricidal struggle of the War of the Roses, whilst bringing financial anxiety, added impetus to the vision of a great public school for the aristocracy.

The type of student is typified by young William Paston who left his Norfolk manor-house in 1477 for Eton. He is a happy example, for his family left invaluable sidelights on contemporary life at that time. The Paston Letters give a true detailed picture of fifteenth-century life in a rural society—an age when bargaining was the natural preliminary to child-marriage. It must have been

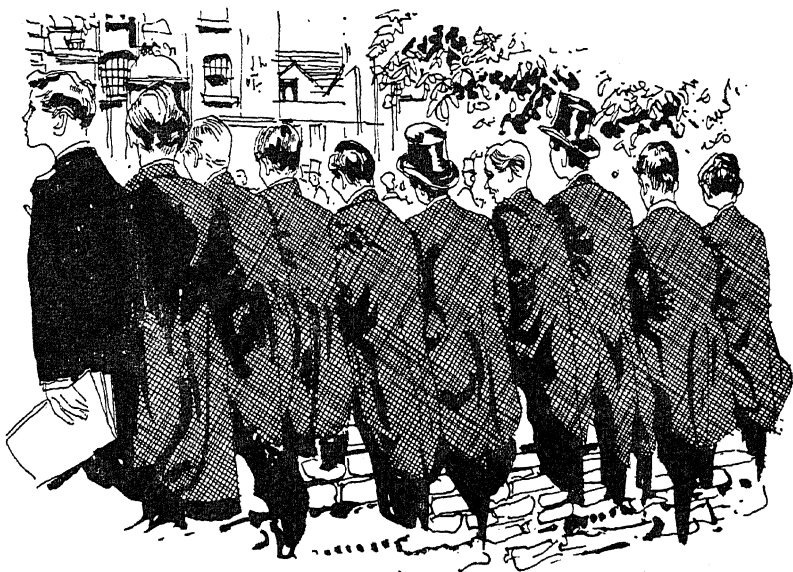
a restless and creative century. The trace of mural painting in the College Chapel—by an English artist, William Baker, about 1479—is indicative of the wealth of colour that adorned the walls of English manor-houses, enriched at times by “Cloth of Arras” tapestries.

The women who graced these country houses must have been kittle creatures if a Dutch historian’s comments are true. He declared “they are well dressed, fond of taking it easy, and commonly leave household matters and drudgery to their servants. They sit at their doors, in fine clothes, to see and be seen of the passers-by. They spend their time walking, riding, visiting their friends, making merry with them at childbirths, christenings, churchings and funerals. This is why England is called the paradise of married women. They lie till nine or ten every morning, then, being roused forth of their dens they are two or three hours in putting on their robes, which being done they go to dinner, where no delicacies are wanting. Then, their bodies satisfied and their heads prettily mizzled with wine, they walk abroad for a time, or else confer with their familiars, as women, you know, are talkative enough, and can chat like pies, all the world knoweth it. Thus some spend the day till supper time, and then the night as before.”

Against such a background, Eton College stood as an island of scholarly culture—gradually expanding, taking in the creative influences of the day, moulding the lines of character—a long-drawn-out mellowing process that continued throughout the warmth of the Renaissance, the cold zeal of the Reformation, the glory of Elizabethan and Shakespearean England, the frivolous patter of the Stuart days, the rigour of the Puritans, the bawdy reaction and bored dalliance of the Restoration, the excesses of the eighteenth century . . . excesses that permitted children to be hung for theft, women publicly flogged, and endless carnivals and diversions at Vauxhall and Ranelagh. This wanton gaiety and hopeless poverty were contrasted by the reflective life of Eton which mirrored the contemplative prosperity of a serener day. The contrast continued throughout the high spirits of the Regency, the inequalities of the industrial revolution, the Victorian era, the high life of Edwardianism, and the aftermath of two World Wars. Eton has survived without loss of character. The vintage qualities of each century have been assimilated. We,

in this generation, are the inheritors of the tradition and cumulative learning of over five hundred years.

In the light of such an historical setting, it is permissible to ask what effect this rich continuity of existence has upon an Etonian education. One answer is to recall the Fourth of June. Here is a man, distinguished in a broad walk of life, who has returned to the scene of his youth. He listens to the thunderstorm



that threatens to ruin the day and thinks of the occasion—was it forty, or fifty years ago?—when a June cloudburst reduced a radiant sister to tears. This time the heavens relent. He walks across paving-stones, that once knew the vigorous scamper of hasty youth, into a world of unchanging tempo. He meditates as he strolls by the Fellow's Pond. The day is passing too quickly. He finds that little has altered. The Speeches in the Upper School were just the same, the seats were still terribly hard, whilst the prospect of having to listen to a score of items before luncheon seemed as grim as ever. The Speeches echoed a classic note. He recalls the quotation of an Eton master of the last century . . . "Every school should make the most of that which is its characteristic: Eton should continue to cultivate taste."

That sentiment is perhaps not so applicable today. Then the product of Eton was intended for the liberal professions. The college was a "nursery of men of taste, and the men of taste were statesmen". The claim no longer stands in its fullness. Even so, the Speeches recalled something of that former standard. And yet, in every other respect, the present generation of Eton youth looked little different. Like his predecessor, he sees only the present. His horizon is "now" . . . a glorious "now" inexplicably blended with the immediate past, with little reference or regard to the future. Unconscious pride of allegiance to Eton is undeveloped. That will come later. Its form will be moulded in part by taste and a catholic interpretation of culture.

What other memories are stirred by the Fourth of June, the festival introduced to commemorate a visit of King George III and held on his birthday. As so often happens, the very names themselves are sufficient to release channels of thought. Poet's Walk . . . Sixth Form Bench . . . Sheep's Bridge . . . Cuckoo Weir . . . Agar's Plough. It is impossible to visualize Eton without thinking of the felicitous runs made on this hallowed field. That last match as the season came to an end, when we played until the flight of the ball could no longer be seen in the gathering dusk. The last ball bowled. The feeling of regret as stumps were drawn. The fellowship of the team was broken. The field was silent. The Eton of cricketers is packed with private sentiment. But the School is still batting . . . the runs are still coming . . . though the wickets are falling quicker. The youthful batsmen cannot realize that every stroke they make will be imprinted on their memory. Some of the spectators with faces like vellum do remember, and in so doing try to throw off the years much to the embarrassment of shiny-faced sons who try to restore the family dignity. The little dark-coated youngsters with their ridiculously big silk hats have no time for the past. But even the youngsters seem to sense that on the Fourth the glory of cricket reaches an even greater radiance.

Other memories would be the Cloisters . . . Lupton's Tower . . . College Hall . . . the Gallery where Etonians of eminence gaze benignly upon those who may yet be their companions . . . the school-yard . . . the austere but simple lines of the Chapel with its massive buttresses of grey stone . . . the delicate bronze statue of the Founder . . . maybe the beauty of the Thames that



swells to the fullness of shimmering silver in the summer sun, for at Eton the reaches of the river are indeed regal . . . or perhaps the billowing fabric of the Castle that dominates the countryside. Another memory may be stirred during the Procession of the Boats as the crews in their distinctive costumes and white duck trousers glide up the river . . . a memory of William Cory, the composer of the Song, and his diary entry for 9th January, 1863 . . . "I could not get to sleep last night, being engaged in making a half-humorous, half-sentimental boating song for the Fourth of June; and when I wake I find it burning to be written out. I do a song with a tune in my head, or perhaps two; last night it was 'Waiting for the waggon', and 'A health to the outward bound'." Then from a distance come the strains of the Boating Song:

Others will fill our places  
Dressed in the old light blue;  
We'll recollect our races,  
We'll to the flag be true,  
And youth will be still in our faces  
When we cheer for an Eton crew.

Twenty Years hence this weather  
May tempt us from office stools,  
We may be slow on the feather  
And seem to the boys old fools,  
But we'll still swing together  
And swear by the best of schools.

Wykehamists and Harrovians can hardly be expected to agree with the last line, but not even the most biased could be unmoved by the scene at Fellows Eyot when the night air is rent by multi-coloured fireworks. The Fourth of June dies for another year in a wave of flashing lights, sound and colour.

## BARGAIN-HUNTING

MANY a visitor to London for the attractions of the Season fills in the odd hour with visits to antique shops, preferably the unfashionable ones tucked away in some side-street where the choice piece can be picked up at a figure that would be ridiculed in the West End. Few things give such pleasure as a genuine bargain found this way. It permits the connoisseur to revel in his knowledge, and with reasonable justification, for there is an air of intoxication about specialized learning. It carries with it a feeling of infallibility. Pitfalls are known. Fakes and reproductions are rejected. If old china is your taste, there is no danger of a dealer selling you inferior Dresden and Sèvres. There is a delicacy and freshness about old English porcelain that refuses to acknowledge the centuries, daintily fashioned Crown Derby bisque figures, modelled perhaps by Spengler, that were surely intended to flirt by candlelight with the gentle tinkle of a harpsichord in the background.

The *dilettante* collector of glass is enchanted by the translucent beauty and crystalline perfection of his collection. The enthusiasm is understandable. There is a natural fascination about letting the fingers play round a fragile wine vessel, perhaps a slender baluster with an air-beaded stem, and to think of the toasts it has known, the secrets it has heard, the fashions it has seen, the lips that have touched its rim. The old wine-glasses of England have shared much of our history. They keep silent. Only the connoisseur can name their intrinsic value. He knows where they come in the evolutionary process of glass-making. He thinks of some of the landmarks . . . the primitive beginnings almost two thousand years before Christ at the hands of the Egyptians; the abrupt change in the Theban Dynasty with the Syrian innovation of the glass-blowing tube; the colourless Venetian glass of the fifteenth century, which Jacobo Verzelini made in London, after obtaining the permission of Queen Elizabeth; the translation into English by Christopher Merret of *Arte Vetraria*, the recognized Italian work on glass-making; the slow emancipation of the



English that followed. Every reign brought changes. Invariably they reflected the mood of the period . . . from the seventeenth-century "flint-glass" of George Ravenscroft to the revolutionary experiments of twentieth-century glass-technology. The specialist in this branch of "the arts of fire" has plenty to learn and a good chance of picking-up a choice specimen on some dusty shelf in Kensington or Bloomsbury.

Every collector's taste can be satisfied. One man may specialize in looking-glasses of the Queen Anne period, resplendent in their gilt gesso frames . . . or the rarer Jacobean mirrors of Venetian silvered glass, which are seen at their best in Hampton Court Palace . . . or become excited by the prospect of acquiring a flawless Vauxhall plate, which John Evelyn, the diarist, described as "looking-glasses far larger and better than any that came from Venice". The collector of old furniture in similar fashion has silent hopes of picking up a set of Daniel Marot chairs and will quote current values by recalling that day in Sotheby's some twenty years ago when six of these chairs from Pinkie House, Musselburgh, realized £1,900. The collector of sporting pictures thinks of John Wotton, Ben Marshall, Thomas Rowlandson, Dean Wolstenholme, Samuel Alken, John Ferneley, or any of the sporting artists from the seventeenth-century Francis Barlow to Sir Alfred Munnings. The range is endless . . . snuff-boxes that knew the whims of gallants and the swirl of frills; Cosway miniatures; ivory fans of lace-like quality; pouncet boxes; clocks of every conceivable shape and complexity, like the intricate astronomical clock made by the Abbot of St. Albans in the reign of Richard II.

There is no doubting the pleasure that can be had on these expeditions, the thrill that never palls of finding a bargain in an old antique shop.

## THE HEART OF THE SEASON

IT IS true to say that the London Season revolves round the Royal Courts. So much turns upon that large gilt card which has the power to take its recipient into Buckingham Palace for that moment which all *débutantes* dream about. Learning to curtsy has been a preoccupation for months. Dressmakers, photographers, cosmeticists . . . all play their part in preparing these girls in white for those few seconds when pale and very young they feel that they are alone with the Queen in the Throne Room. Of the Palace itself only a fragmentary impression is gained of ornate chandeliers, rich carpets, masses of flowers and people, with the Lord Chamberlain in the role of an omnipresent controller, for was he not commanded to issue the invitation, whilst none other than his voice summoned each *débutante* into the Royal presence, again under his eagle scrutiny. Being presented at Court can be an ordeal as well as a memorable experience.

Buckingham Palace has gained the affection of all English-speaking people for not only is it the visible symbol of the monarchy, but it is the home of the Queen, a landmark with a dual personality. The Palace itself is not nearly so venerable as many people imagine. It stands on the mulberry garden planted by James the First in the hope that the growth of silk in England would be encouraged. Thousands of young trees were brought from the Continent for this purpose, but the plan failed, though innumerable people sampled and appreciated tarts filled with mulberries from this plantation as both Pepys and Evelyn record. Young and old fops made merry in Hyde Park and Mulberry Gardens, where there walked and drove "many hundreds of rich coaches and gallants . . . most shameful powdered hair men and spotted women". In 1654 Evelyn "observed how the women began to paint themselves, formerly a most ignominious thing, and used only by prostitutes". Of that mulberry garden only one tree remains, and that is opposite Queen Anne's Gate.

This site has known three houses. The first was called Goring House, then Arlington House. It is an interesting possibility that

the first cup of tea to be brewed in England was drunk where the Palace now stands, for in 1674 the Earl of Arlington imported the first pound of tea to enter this country for which he paid sixty shillings. The Duke of Buckingham bought Arlington House and built Buckingham House, a pleasant red-brick country house



with stables, outbuildings, courtyard, and fountain. There is a rustic touch about the Duke's description of his new establishment for in a letter to a friend he tells how the spinneys were full of nightingales and blackbirds. When he died the House went to the Duchess, his third wife. It was on the death of this eccentric woman that the Royal associations of the House began. George III bought it as a dower-house for Queen Charlotte. It was the first hint of a dual existence, for though its purpose was purely domestic the official levees being held at the Court of St. James's,

a certain number of Court routine activities found their way to Buckingham House. George IV had ambitious plans and called in Nash to rebuild the Queen's House. Both men died before the scheme was completed. William IV had no love for the place, refused to live in it, and offered its roof to Parliament when the Houses of Parliament were destroyed by fire.

Buckingham Palace lived up to its name when Victoria became Queen. She was the first sovereign to make it a regular Royal residence, though prints of that time show it as being different from its present appearance. On the site where now stands Queen Victoria's statue was the Marble Arch, which served as a ceremonial entrance, with the Royal Standard flying on top when the Queen was in residence. The Marble Arch was moved to its present site in 1851. The Palace was altered in 1847 and 1914; the latter was perhaps the most extensive as under the Queen Victoria Memorial Scheme the Mall was widened, Admiralty Arch and the Victoria Memorial were erected, and the front of the Palace was changed.

The back of the Palace is virtually unchanged. It is a surprisingly lovely piece of classical architecture, usually seen at its best in the heat of a summer afternoon with a royal garden party in progress. Except for the distant rumble of the London traffic, you might be in the grounds of an old country house. The first impression from the terrace is of immaculate lawns that lead to an artificial lake edged with the barest suspicion of reeds. To this must be added the extraordinary mirage of colour created by hundreds of women and girls in dresses of every shade and hue. The men in grey hats add an almost Ascot touch. In the centre the royal marquee. There is continual movement with the result that the changing colour-pattern is like a shimmering rainbow. If you wish to take away a picture of Buckingham Palace, what better than the vignette of the Queen, as a young girl, blushing and self-conscious, sinks into a curtsy . . . a tiny incident that personifies the London Season?

## FROM COFFEE HOUSES TO CLUBS

THE English club as seen in London is a unique institution. It has no counterpart in any other capital of Europe. The tradition is a feature of our national life. Names such as White's, Arthur's, Brook's, Boodle's, Athanaeum, Carlton, Reform and Garrick have a significance in excess of their original intention. They stand in the full stream of English social history, recording and epitomizing trends of thought and fashions of days long past. There is a family likeness about all clubs due to a common parentage, but each has its own colouring; the cumulative taste of generations of members has created distinctive traditions . . . traditions that have watched the birth of the Season, the changing pattern of clothes, modes of speech, tastes in food, and outlook on life. The purlieus of Pall Mall, Piccadilly, and St. James's have known the Englishman in his expansive moments.

The Mermaid Tavern in Bread Street attracted the first club in London at the end of the sixteenth century. It was patronized, if not instituted, by Sir Walter Raleigh, and frequented by such men as Shakespeare, Beaumont, Cotton, Fletcher and Ben Jonson. The club tradition, however, owes its origin to the coffee houses of the seventeenth century. Today it is difficult to appreciate the role they filled. The social historian John Ashton puts the number of London coffee houses at the beginning of the eighteenth century as 480. Macaulay records that "foreigners remarked that the coffee house was that which especially distinguished London from all other cities; that the coffee house was the Londoner's home, and that those who wished to find a gentleman commonly asked, not whether he lived in Fleet Street, or Chancery Lane, but whether he frequented the *Grecian* or the *Rainbow*". A visitor to London about 1720 wrote: "We rise by nine, and those that frequent great men's levees find entertainment at them till eleven. . . . About twelve the *Beau-Monde* assembles in chocolate and coffee houses. . . . We are carried to these places in *Sedans*. . . . If it be fine, we take a turn in the Park till two, when



we go to dinner; and if it be dirty you are entertained at picket or basset at *White's*, or you may talk politics at the *Smyrna* and *St. James's* . . . but a *Whig* will no more go to the *Cocoa-Tree* . . . than a *Tory* will be seen at the *St. James's*. . . . At two we . . . dine at the Tavern, where we sit till six that we go to the Play, except you are invited to the table of some great man. . . . After the Play . . . to *Tom's* and *Will's* Coffee-Houses, where there is . . . picket and the best of conversation till midnight. . . . Or if you like rather the company of ladies, there are Assemblies at most people of quality Houses."

The coffee house was the centre of scintillating conversation. Addison presided at *Button's*. Hogarth frequented *Old Slaughter*. Pope, Gray, Steele and Gay contributed to the wealth of wit and learning. Horace Walpole flittered across the scene in a spate of gossip and dining. Talk touched upon every conceivable topic. Court intrigues . . . political discussions . . . literary cliques arguing about the relative qualities of Dryden and Molière, and all for a penny. The man-about-town upon payment of that sum at the bar was entitled to make full use of the amenities of the house. It was a period of incessant chatter. Everyone could make their offering to the dialectic pool.

Each coffee house attracted a different clientele. The range was extraordinary. During the reign of Anne, the October Club met at the Bell Tavern in Westminster, where members drank copious quantities of October ale. Dean Swift was a prominent club man in this period, and frequented the Thatched House, the Star and Garter in Pall Mall, and *Ozinda's* Coffee-House by *St. James's*. He wrote to Stella . . . "There was much drinking, little thinking." The Scriblerus Club was of a literary nature. The Calves' Head was instituted to scorn the memory of Charles I. Street clubs were instituted in attempts to avoid the dangers at night from footpads and bad roads. There were Hell-Fire clubs that shocked propriety. The members dined in a blasphemous atmosphere, ordered Holy Ghost pies in the taverns they favoured, and acted sacrilegious plays about the Virgin Mary. The Mohocks were responsible for shocking outrages. These roystering blades haunted dimly-lit streets with avowed intent to slit people's noses, wound women with knives, and roll them down Saffron Hill in tubs.

The Kit Cat Club was formed about 1700. It consisted of



thirty-nine noblemen and gentlemen of strong leaning to the House of Hanover. Such worthies as Addison, Halifax, Congreve, Somers and Vanbrugh met at an insignificant house in Shire Lane by Temple Bar and consumed pies supplied by a mutton-pie man known as Christopher Katt. Their toasting tumblers were famed. Each was inscribed with a toast in verse praising some reigning beauty, the favourites being the four daughters of Marlborough. The 'Tatlers' Club was attended by smokers and garrulous talkers. Members of the Royal Society Club dined together on Thursdays at Pontack's, the French eating-house in Abchurch Lane. Lloyd started a coffee house in Tower Street and found his patrons among marine insurers. The Grecian attracted lawyers. Men of God frequented Child's in St. Paul's Churchyard. Garraway's was the haunt of City men. Dryden presided at Will's in Covent Garden.

Such was the club of the coffee house days. But the forerunner of the current idea of a club was White's in St. James's Street. White's Chocolate House marks the transition from the coffee-house tradition to the club life of the nineteenth century. It was opened in 1698 by one Francis White in St. James's Street. Upon his death in 1711 his widow, Elizabeth White, took charge of the business and showed her astuteness by allowing Heidegger to use the premises as a centre for the sale of tickets for his *ridottos*, masquerades and balls, which were fashionable among eighteenth-century society. The Chocolate House was admirably sited and soon attracted widespread patronage. Its reputation for high play caught Hogarth's eye in Plate IV of the *Rake's Progress*. This shows that Rake's arrest for debt at the corner of Radley Street. A sign hangs from the front of the house bearing the name White's. A flash of forked lightning is directed at the club. In the foreground a group of street boys are seen gambling with cards and dice.

In 1743 the Young Club at White's was formed on almost identical lines to the senior club. It served as a place of probation for likely members. In 1755 both clubs moved to the "Great House in St. James's Street". The Young Club had an exuberant membership. One of the most lively was George Selwyn. Sent down from Oxford in 1744, he became a man-about-town, developed a curious fondness for children and an insatiable passion for public hangings. Beau Brummell was a notable

member of White's. Elected in 1798, he became a self-constituted leader of fashion. His name is associated with the club's famous bay window built by Martindale, which he made the centre of fashion. High play ruined him. He played whist at White's and won £10,000 from George Drummond, the banker, at one sitting. On another occasion he gained £26,000. His luck changed. The nineteenth-century revival of gaming brought heavy losses. Brummell crossed to Calais to avoid his creditors. He was later arrested, imprisoned for debt, and died at Caen in 1840 in a lunatic asylum.

There are many other clubs of note, but the range is so vast that only a few can be mentioned. Brook's Club included among its earliest members such men as Burke, Sheridan, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Garrick and Hume. Boodle's and Arthur's were essentially clubs for country gentlemen. Watier's was fashionable for a time through receiving direct patronage of the Prince Regent. It gained later a reputation for high and wild play. The Travellers', originally started in 1814, was one of the earliest of its type. Planned by Lord Castlereagh, it demanded that candidates must have "travelled out of the British Isles to a distance of at least five hundred miles in a straight line". The Athenaeum dates from 1824. Its history and members have alike been distinguished from the outset. The Garrick was instituted in 1831 with the avowed purpose of "bringing together the patrons of the drama and its professors, and to offer literary men a rendezvous". The Garrick steak is a pleasing memory. It is made by cutting through the sirloin. The flat piece was both upper and under cut. A final word about club customs. The rule at Arthur's and Boodle's laid it down that silver given in change had to be plunged in boiling water and swung round in a leather bag to ensure cleanliness. The long-drawn-out clash between snuff-taking and the use of tobacco produced several amusing rules. Bare tolerance of the weed banished members to the depths of basements, stableyards, and, in the case of the Athenaeum, a small room at the top of the house where lonely smokers took refuge in 1862.

The Season is primarily a woman's preoccupation. Her tastes are considered, her foibles anticipated, but clubland is still a masculine stronghold, where man comes into his own, and women know their place . . . at least in theory.

## PENNANTS, BREASTPLATES AND PLUMES

THE London Season would lose one of its show-pieces if the Royal Tournament ceased to attract its thousands to Earl's Court. As an event it has been developing for three-fourths of a century. It began in 1878 on Wimbledon Common, where marksmen from all over the country gathered to shoot for the Queen's Prize, a test similar to that now held at Bisley. From records it appears that the attractions of the West End were too potent for many of the men with the result that their marksmanship suffered. The Volunteer Officers in charge of the camp were instructed to "find something to keep the boys occupied". They did so by organizing a pageant. Since then it has had three homes. It went first to the Agricultural Hall, Islington, then in 1906 to Olympia, and finally, after outgrowing Olympia, Earl's Court has been the site since 1950. A few statistics give some indication of its popular appeal. From a loss of £500 it has shown a profit of some £30,000, whilst since 1896 Service charities have benefited by more than £600,000.

It is a thrilling show! An object-lesson in the disciplined co-ordination of mind and muscle. The uniforms dazzle with their colour and braided brilliance. It is always difficult to say which Service puts on the best performance. Close to the top in any poll would be the Naval Field Gun Display when hearty muscle is on parade in singlet and trousers as the competing teams fling themselves into the business of tearing heavy guns to pieces, dumping the parts over walls and other obstacles, in a frenzied race to reassemble the lethal jig-saw together at the finish. Many nasty knocks are received, but it is rare for an accident to happen.

Nothing but admiration is roused by the demonstrations of military timing and evolution in the intricate Musical Rides of the Household Cavalry and Queen's Troop, Royal Horse Artillery. In criss-cross formation they thunder over the arena, the gun carriage wheels missing each other by the barest fraction of an inch. Not until the line swirls into final formation in a cloud

of dust is the tension relieved. The trick riding by the Royal Army Service Corps is equally impressive, but then so are innumerable other items . . . the Massed Bands of the Royal Air Force . . . the incisive Physical Training Display by the three Women's Services . . . maybe a Commando Display by Royal Marines in which they scale a cliff and capture enemy positions. On occasions the horses earn more applause than their riders, possibly during the musical ride of the Life Guards when these magnificent creatures forget their military bearing and imitate equine circus ladies in their intricate formation-moves to the accompaniment of a band playing dance music.

Historical pageants have been a special feature of past Tournaments. In an age that thinks in terms of space-travel and flying saucers, it is interesting to recall some of those of previous years . . . Britannia's Muster; The Navy Past and Present; Armada Days in Norfolk; The Presentation of the First Prince of Wales; The Ceremony of the Keys at the Tower of London; The spirit of Co-operation, by H.M.S. *Excellent* and the Queen's Royal Regiment. A memorable occasion was the French Cavalry's visit in 1919. In the days when Zeppelins were the menace, Olympia was packed every day to watch the R.A.F. bombing an airship.

Those are the highlights, but very often it is the small detail that lingers in the mind afterwards. The simultaneous metallic sound of hands on magazines . . . the wonderful way in which mere lads handle their rifles . . . the fascination of drumsticks twirling in unison . . . the thrill of bareback or stirrup work . . . the incisive way in which each item is rounded off by the youthful captains who salute smartly below the royal box when their units have completed their programme . . . and the memory of fluttering pennants, gleaming breastplates, and waving plumes that will linger until strawberries come again into season.

## FOR OVER A THOUSAND YEARS A CITY

IT HAS been said that the youth of America is their oldest tradition; it has been going on now for 300 years. No doubt that explains why an American was so appreciative of Winchester. I had climbed St. Catherine's Hill, and there I found him, reading his guide-book like a good transatlantic citizen and ready to be chatty on the slightest provocation. His enthusiasm was understandable. If you care for old things, for beautiful things, and the history of England, there is only one city which will match your expectations . . . drive sixty-odd miles from London and you come to Winchester. I know it well, virtually from childhood, yet the view from St. Catherine's Hill never palls. It always quickens my heart after an absence. It is a tender, lovely vista with meaning more pregnant to an Englishman than the white cliffs of Dover.

"There's something about that town," said the American, "that gets me right in the throat; and I can't find words for it." I knew what he meant. The cynic may say that Winchester has about it a pompous, retired air, and that the tradesmen give the impression of specializing in the local gentry, but for those to whom the past means something, I know of no place in these islands where history is so close. At every corner the ghosts of centuries pull at one's sleeve. I looked at the city lying in the hollow and saw the Cathedral with its massive tower, the College partly obscured by trees, and the Hospital of St. Cross. For more than a thousand years Winchester has been a city; in fact, so much began within its boundaries that even the American thought I was over-selling.

I informed him that the Cathedral was the longest in England . . . that it covered within its walls more than an acre-and-a-half . . . that it held the remains of men who governed the country before England had received its name, men like Cnut, Cyneigils and Egbert, who at Witan in 827 proclaimed himself king of a realm which he called Angle-land. I pointed out that within Wolvesey Walls the greatest record of our national history, the

*English Chronicle*, was conceived by Alfred . . . that in Winchester the first curfew rang . . . Domesday was compiled . . . the first English Public School was founded.

Later on I went into the Great Hall of the Castle of Winchester, all that now remains of the royal palace which stood on the traditional site of the Castle of King Arthur. On the wall hung the Round Table of King Arthur, described in *Morte d'Arthur* and printed by Caxton. Obviously it is not the table of legend, though it may well be 800 years old. As I stood in that Great Hall I thought of other associations linked with the King who rode down history on a harp-string. I pictured Tintagel, that grey rock above the sea, haunted by Arthur and his Knights. . . . I thought of the Vale of Avalon with its billowing sea of mist through which glided that "dusky barge, dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern" in which the hooded queens bore the dying Arthur, his scabbard empty of Excalibur.

A lane close to the Itchen led to a grey gatehouse guarding a courtyard and grey stone building. Here was the Hospital of St. Cross, the oldest almhouse in England. Like all Cluniac houses, the foundation emphasized the need for relief to the poor. The tradition persists in the Wayfarer's Dole, where at a hatch in Beaufort's Tower you can get a token offering of ale in a horn and bread on a wooden platter. A glimpse of the Brethren of St. Cross in their long gowns with a silver cross worn on the breast suggests a world utterly remote from our everyday existence.

I have left to the last any reference to Winchester College, for though the College of St. Mary was not the first school in England, it is the oldest Public School in the country. For the benefit of Etonians, I might add that it was the precursor of their foundation. The first Headmaster of Eton was Waynflete, Headmaster of Winchester, and later Bishop of Winchester. I have heard criticism that Winchester is an anachronism, that it is contrary to the spirit and trend of social change. I content myself by saying that it has long been a mistake to imagine that Winchester is parochial. On the contrary, she is very close to the pulse of the world . . . a law unto herself, an entity behind walls of tradition, but the outward air of indifference is deceptive. Winchester prepares those whom she would educate, for the world as it is at that particular moment. The suggestion of monastic calm that would have appealed to its Founder and the



original priests and scholars is only surface deep. Winchester is essentially a college of the world. Its product is a child of the world: a child of culture, trained to love the world with discriminating care and self-assured ease—qualities that are finally rounded by her sister college at Oxford.

Winchester left me feeling sad. It is not the same as childhood. It lacks the flattering spaciousness of boyhood's vision. In that sense, every visitation is a butchering of innocent memories. Instead of shades of Roman legionaries, Danish Vikings, Saxon berserkers, friars, merchants and pilgrims, I looked at the slow-moving line of unending traffic in the High Street, traffic lights and pedestrian crossings, and thought of Aldous Huxley's remark that progress is a very recent invention. But the visit is well worth a few hours stolen from the lighter side of the Season.

## PAGEANTRY AND TRADITION

LONDONERS are notorious in their blasé acceptance of their historic past and customs. The Thames may be liquid history, but the Cockney is reluctant to acknowledge the fact, such reactions belong to Americans who claim to feel the tradition welling in their throats. Sentiment belongs to visitors. And yet, the abiding feature of the English character is an unconscious, almost naïve form of patriotism. It is the connecting thread that persists through our national life across the centuries. In that light the pageantry and tradition kept alive is not just meaningless pantomimic play. It is the visible expression of the continuity of this innate pride and belief in our race and institutions, a form of self-identification with the England of the past.

The suggestion that nations can be identified by individuals is of recent development. John Bull dates from the nineteenth century. Caricaturists are responsible. National impersonation has now reached the point where a council table can be identified by certain characteristics. Lord Ponsonby once recorded a Frenchman's attempts to epitomize national qualities in a few words. He dipped his pen in acid, but the result was wittily original.

He began with his own countrymen.

Un Français un homme intelligent.  
Deux Français altercation violente.  
Trois Français un ménage.

Germany received the expected treatment.

Un Allemand un cochon.  
Deux Allemands la bière.  
Trois Allemands la guerre.

The English have traditional shift.

Un Anglais un imbécile.  
Deux Anglais deux imbéciles.  
Trois Anglais une grande nation.



Given true June weather the familiar scene of Trooping the Colour is London's most impressive military ceremony



Italy has the sting at the end.

Un Italien un artiste.

Deux Italiens un concert.

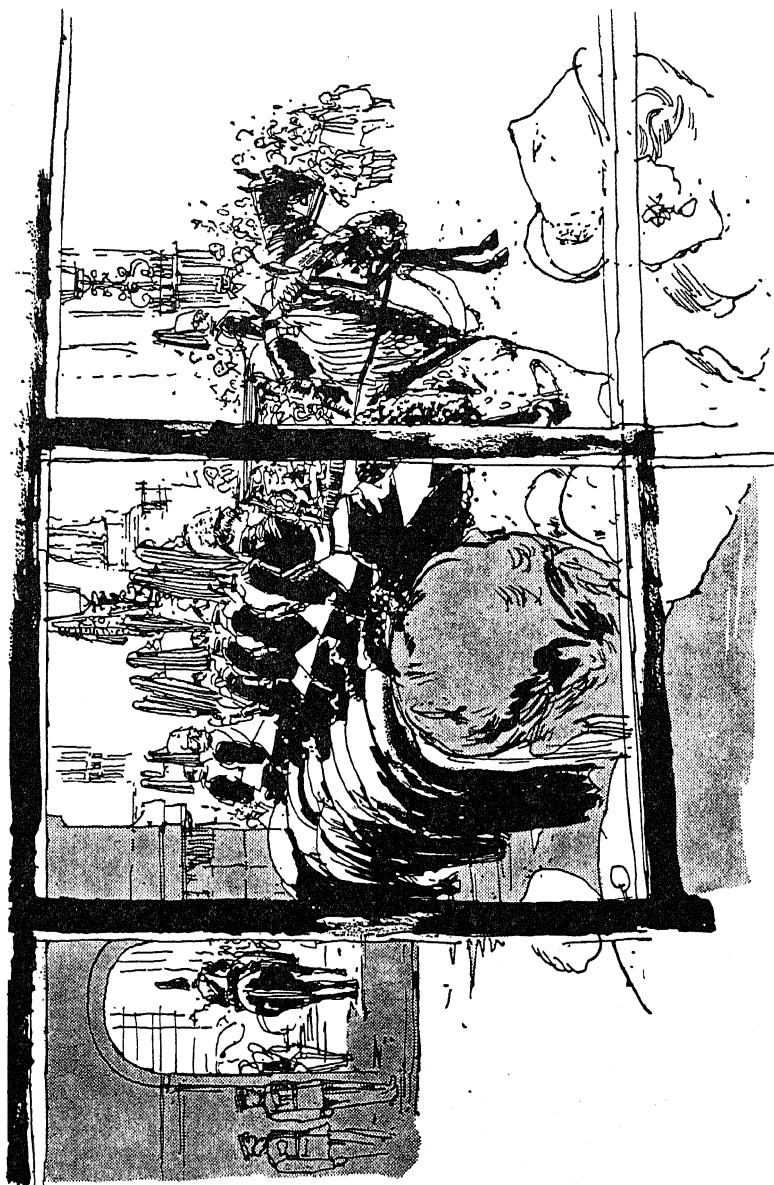
Trois Italiens la défaite.

Such are some of the Frenchman's light-hearted impressions. They are superficial with a dash of truth infused to catch the eye.

If the foreign observer with an average intelligence wants to take away a reliable picture of England, he could do worse than stay in London. It was all very well for Sir Arthur Conan Doyle to say that London is a great cesspool into which all the loungers of the Empire are irresistibly drained. There are times and places when such criticism may be true, but the consensus of opinion would side with Doctor Johnson's observation that "the happiness of London is not to be conceived but by those who have been in it. I will venture to say, there is more learning and science within the circumference of ten miles from where we now sit than in all the rest of the kingdom". The remarks may be dated and belong to a past century, but they are nevertheless still applicable. Certain aspects of London life do not die. The scenes and ceremonies that take place within the Capital reflect many aspects of our national life. In light vein the Season touches upon many scenes and customs of historic interest. The majority but touch upon the gaieties of London life, but they form a link with the Royal Courts of many centuries. Lord Byron wrote in a letter to James Hogg that "London is a damned place to be sure, but the only one in the world (at least in the English world) for fun." In many ways that is still true. The scenes of London's traditional jollification are in line with the days of Princess Pocahontas and the glories of Vauxhall.

There are other traditions of more serious, yet none the less colourful, significance. The familiar scene of Trooping the Colour never loses its impressive solemnity. The Horse Guards Parade . . . the stirring music of massed bands . . . military attachés in colourful uniforms . . . the glint of naked steel . . . the staccato clatter of hoofs. It is a ceremony dear to the heart of Londoners and one that appeals to the imagination of all foreigners.

This guard-mounting ceremony can be traced to the mid-eighteenth century when the battalion providing guards for the



day trooped the Colour to be carried on the King's Guard. No moment in the entire Season can equal the pageantry and tradition that finds expression as the Queen rides in from the Mall escorted by a Sovereign's Escort of Household Cavalry, and attended by the royal procession. She then inspects the troops—twenty minutes of tremendous strain for the men on parade, often under a hot sun. The stillness is broken by the band and drums with a slow march from right to left of the line, then a quick march from left to right. The Colour Escort steps out, halts opposite the Colour, which is taken over by the Ensign as the band plays the National Anthem, and trooped down the line. The guards march past in slow and quick time, form up again in line, then—when the Queen has received a royal salute—form into divisions. Finally, at the head of the Queen's Guard, the Queen rides along the Mall to Buckingham Palace. The relieving ceremony then takes place in the forecourt, and the remaining guards march past and return to barracks. Given true June weather this hour is London's most impressive military ceremony.

## SHADES OF BLUE

THE Season is so spaced that it allows for occasional visits to centres of interest within easy reach of London. Of these Oxford and Cambridge are natural choices.

Gertrude Bone posed the question, should not the grey towers of Oxford first steal upon one's consciousness with solemn music and the grave melody of ancient chimes; the dreaming spires but deepen the shadows of antiquity within the ancient trees? No doubt they do for some people. I was not so susceptible. I found Oxford full of portentous trivialities. I admit that architecturally the place is all a paragon of noble style . . . had I been born 300 years ago I would have been just as appreciative of the High and the Broad . . . but my main concern was the people I met.

I found the women disappointing. They reminded me of Edith Sitwell's description when she said that the trouble with most Englishwomen is that they will dress as if they had been a mouse in a previous incarnation, or hope to be in the next. It certainly applied to the shopping variety, though not to their habits. It is not surprising that Oxford has such a fine Twickenham record. A ten-minute walk along the shopping centre about midday taught me the latest in hands-offs and obstructionist tactics as demonstrated by females intended by nature to be second-row forwards. Oxford may be the home of lost causes—it is certainly the depot of forgotten manners.

Oxford teashops and talk-shops . . . gossip centres where everything is not known but everything is said. Those who frequent such establishments run to type. There is invariably the young woman with wistful expression who says "Thanks awfully" when you pay your bill and absent-mindedly crumbles a meringue like a shattered romance. The one I met looked as if she half-expected William Morris to call, but accepted the substitute with a brave smile. Having acknowledged Andromeda chained to a cash-till, I sat at a table occupied by three young women. It was like sipping coffee in a perfume store. Although not noticed, I was included in the conversation. It was like communing with my own subconsciousness. The girl on my right



was a trifle unsure whether she was going to have a baby. Behind the shield of a newspaper I pitied her uncertainty. The second had discovered Graham Greene. The third needed a genuine girl friend. In Genesis it says that it is not good for a man to be alone, but on occasions such as these it can be a relief. I moved on to another café where they clothe their cakes in cellophane jackets. This time I was treated to an intolerable amount of rubbish from a couple of students who did not appear to have a single redeeming defect. A Balliol education may give a man a tranquil sense of effortless superiority, but in many cases it is merely a pose which makes the individual mistake appetite for ability.

My experience of a female don was unnerving. No doubt estimable in their own sphere, I found them terrifying creatures. For one thing, I dislike hair in stringy buns. As far as I could make out they were disturbed about the dangers of undergraduettes coming into contact with masculine society. The danger is overrated. The girl students I saw in the town looked short on intellect, but long on shape. They convinced me more than ever that there are no such things as dangerous women; there are only susceptible men. If anyone fell in love with some of these young women, it would indeed be the triumph of imagination over intelligence. The women's colleges at Oxford may provide a quota of pin-up girls, but those I examined had hockey legs emerging from shapeless tweeds, probably preferred cocoa to claret, and were relieved when elastic ceased to be in short supply. I am not keen on detective novels, but Dorothy Sayers once described the atmosphere of a female college in *Gaudy Night* . . . one of the nights I am not keen to sample.

Other thumbnail impressions include the heartiness of unscholarly Rhodes scholars . . . the flutter from Boar's Hill which hints that Liberalism still breathes . . . the pseudo-culture of the chunnerings that rise above the hubbub of Union debating irrelevances. I saw no sign of the Oxford Group. I heard no embryonic Bevan. Several elderly men were enjoying a drink in the *Mitre*. I know it is foolish to lay down too hard and fast a rule as to what shall or shall not elate a man above his normal self. The Yorkshire proverb that there are trimmings for all sorts of cloth and buttons for fustian is applicable to things of the spirit also. You cannot prophesy what will make life pleasanter for the

individual. I only hope that imagination was given to these gentlemen to compensate them for what they are not; and a sense of humour to console them for what they are. Judging by their conversation the first half of their lives had consisted of the capacity to enjoy themselves without the chance; the last half was offering the chance without the capacity.

Such are some of the superficial aspects that confront the casual visitor to Oxford. I have made no mention of the industrial poaching which has so changed the outward appearance of the city. Not for nothing has it been called the Latin Quarter of the Cowley Works. That side of Oxford is foreign to its original nature. It is a subject that merits separate treatment. I have said that Oxford has changed, yet in a real sense it is changeless. I like it best on a Sunday morning when the tide of traffic has ebbed. Her real heritage can then be seen with towers, spires, courts and roof-line standing out in sunlight and shadow . . . a city of hewn stone set in meadows watered by a quiet river . . . a city of youth fed by memories that come stealing through the half-sleeping, half-waking state of men of all ages . . . a small polity—maybe a trifle spoilt—but withal in and of the world.

One last memory of Oxford. I visited Godstow and the centuries-old inn that hovers above the river. Here is the ideal sporting pub with otters, fish, prints and pewter. I sat outside and watched the chub lying motionless in the water. The weir sounded cool. In the meadow on the opposite side of the river were the remains of the nunnery of Godstow and the place where Fair Rosamond was educated and buried. I thought of Oxford and my pending visit to Cambridge . . . so remarkably alike while they play at differences, and both so remarkably unlike anything else in the world. Thoughts such as these reverberated through my mind as I crossed the rickety bridge. The inscription on the sundial by the lasher completed my train of thought with a touch of sadness:

The bird of Time has but a little way to fly,  
And lo, the bird is on the wing.

And so, on to Cambridge, also a city of many surprises. . . . A female with eyes like the fish-ponds of Heshbon sipped a gin-and-Italian. I leant across an olive-coloured expanse of bosom to

claim my drink . . . "Mind yer bloody fag on me fur!" Cryptic and, although in a much-frequented tavern, not exactly what I expected to find in Cambridge, but the contrast serves to dispel the platitudinous idea that it is a dream city set in an ocean of Combination port. It is true up to a point, but there are other sides to the picture.

In the market-square I listened to rich East Anglian monosyllables describing "wot" was going to win the two-thirty. I envied the atmosphere of serenity in Trinity Great Court and compared it with the dingy meanness of East Road. I thought of a college High Table adorned with erudite dignity and paired it with the austerity of a Romsey Town café. In a King's Parade snack-bar I ate slim Gruyère sandwiches. A few streets away my meal would have been served in a newspaper drenched with vinegar and salt. I stood by the fireplace in the Whim café whilst young gentlemen aired their inexperience. I met dons who had been educated beyond their intelligence. Contrasts were six-a-penny. Genius and poseur rubbed shoulder with shoulder. The clever ones never listened, the stupid ones never talked.

Old Blues, like the importunate widow, seemed to be everywhere. They haunt playing grounds and tow paths like retarded adolescents, are comparatively harmless and often amusing to the point of being unconsciously comical. I am sure they have hair on their chests, I am sure that in their day they were wonderful with bat, ball and oar, but somehow it is pathetic to see ordinary citizens with ordinary degrees refusing to grow up. The near-elderly rowing types are the most entertaining as they stride down Trinity Street with pompous affectation. How sad that they never know the thoughts of their fellow-creatures. Like Tchekhov's eternal student they have never been introduced to their own subconscious. In this democratic age we are all either "ladies" or "gentlemen"—even the public conveniences advertise the fact—but it would be refreshing if some of the elderly Old Blues put away their rompers, remembered their years, and became their age.

It is remarkable the effect sport has on these gamine monuments. I had occasion to be present at an academic gathering that included several of these individuals. That side of their nature was suppressed. The result was unutterably depressing. It was like being in a room of black performing seals with the light

of living burning dim in their pouched eyes. Someone mentioned rowing. Immediately a morose medico seized upon the topic as if here at last was intelligence, which doubtless according to his standards was the case. I suppose that is the penalty we pay for churning out individuals with a standardized education. There are moments when such intellectual contributions attain almost the dignity of manual labour. By this I do not mean that all Old Blues are bores. Some are stimulating company. A characteristic trait of the average Cambridge man is his loyalty to these veterans, though it is not always readily apparent. If he does not wear his heart upon his sleeve, it may well be because that rugged organ is not cut out in the accepted shape, for who would expose to view an object that is polyhedral? But what of the Blues who really have blood in their veins . . . the men who play now? The question is perhaps best answered by contrast with those who watch, either at Fenners or later on in the year at Grange Road. Strip the spectators and how remarkable they would look. Strip your Blue, and he rises to the pristine dignity of man; clothe him, and he falls from his high estate. The untidy scarf, the coat with leather patches at the elbows, corduroy trousers, uncleaned shoes . . . what uniform of degradation is this? Blues, like boxers, are they who, clothed, are in their wrong mind. Stripped out of rude array, they are men who realize that complete ferocity may go hand in hand with perfect amity.

I went for tea in an unpretentious café. A genteel young woman deigned to serve me. She gave the impression that the very act meant social degradation. I dined in a house where time has stood still, though it was refreshing to come across a don who was a Scholar instead of a Temporary Civil Servant. His comments on a Marlowe production at the Arts Theatre made me think that he sat through Shakespeare to recognize the quotations. I visited a different type of residence . . . a cross between a university boarding establishment and a private hotel. Meals were taken with the blinds up. The staff consisted of a soured-looking girl who doled out the plates with an air of disillusionment. My host was a self-professed highbrow. Next to him sat an author whose books were so little known as to be almost confidential. Opposite was a Bright Young Thing with eyelashes that appeared in bundles of three. I could picture her bedroom; empty Arden pots and cigarette-stubs all over the place and her

entire wardrobe hanging behind the door. The fourth member at our table was a Kingsman. I have heard it said that the ideal voice for radio has no substance, no sex, no owner, and a message of importance to every housewife. This individual qualified for the first two.

Cambridge has a fascination peculiar to itself. It has the intimacy of a community the farthest from the work-a-day. At Cambridge a man stores up memories for the years ahead. I walked by the river—unhurried, shy and shadowy—with canoes and punts ruffling the surface like water-insects. An onlooker sensitive to aesthetic values can appreciate the old brickwork of Queens' . . . white bridges receding like sheeted ghosts into the grey light of morning . . . shimmering water-meadows . . . the music in King's Chapel . . . the echo of successive chords lingering . . . the statue of the gentle Founder . . . and even such everyday sights as the flood-tide of bicycles after lectures, and the old man selling violets in Petty Cury.

One last impression. I stood on the wooded hill of Madingley within sight of the towers and spires of Cambridge. Beyond was a scene that brought home the bitter-sweetness of remembered things. I looked across the fields and saw row upon row of white marble crosses, an army—almost four thousand strong—of American Servicemen on their last parade. The American flag stirred in the wind as if fingers were plucking the folds. The moving finger of history must have paused for a moment at the scene. It was something for the historian, the philosopher and the poet to linger over.

In a small compass, Cambridge, like Oxford, is a child of the world.

## TWO EVENINGS OF MUSIC

NO SEASON would be complete without a visit to Drury Lane, which usually offers a full-scale lavish musical production in a theatre that has known three centuries of English stage tradition. Actually the present building dates from 1812 when it was opened with a prologue written by Byron. The historic associations of Drury Lane are remarkable. The theatre has known murder, for Charles Macklin killed a colleague in its Green Room. A monarch boxed the ears of his heir in full public view. George the Third was the object of a madman's murderous attack. From its Royal Box came London's first intimation of the victory of Culloden Moor. Stories of romance, triumph and disaster crowd its past history, whilst, as befits such an historic building, it is haunted by a ghost of friendly disposition. The outside is disappointing, in fact, the street itself is dingy. No doubt the Georgian houses were once pleasant to the eye, but today they look black and grimy. It is difficult to visualize the scene described by Pepys as he strolled along the street on May Day in 1667, as he "saw pretty Nelly standing at her lodgings in Drury Lane in her smock-sleeves and bodice looking upon one: she seemed a mighty pretty creature". In contrast to the uninspiring scene outside, the interior is impressive with magnificent staircases, sweeping rotunda, lofty ceilings, and tremendous auditorium . . . in every way a suitable background for scores of beautiful young girls accompanied by pink young men who sit in lively anticipation for the heavy curtains to part.

The second musical occasion takes us to the South Downs of Sussex where seven hundred years ago the beautiful old Elizabethan house . . . the Manor House of Glyndebourne . . . came into existence. Part of that original house with its panelling still remains, and has belonged to the same family, without once being sold, during that entire length of time. In that sense Glyndebourne has always been well known in Sussex, but not until 1934 did the name appear in the news of the music-world when its owner, Mr. John Christie, announced a "Festival of Mozart

Operas" and invited music-lovers to attend. The opera house was added to the lovely old Manor, which already had a magnificent music-room, a large organ and a musical library unequalled in any private home in England. The acoustics were perfect, and Mr. Christie was fortunate in being able to secure the services of Fritz Busch as conductor and of Carl Ebert as producer for his opera. The cast was selected, not only of the finest singers in Europe, but of some of the best in the world. During the rehearsals they had the complete freedom of the old Manor and lovely grounds, and by degrees became an almost perfect *ensemble*. The music-lovers who journeyed to Glyndebourne by private car and special train for the first performance expected an interesting evening. Instead they heard a performance of *Figaro* which equalled, if not surpassed, any previously heard, even in Mozart's home-city of Salzburg in Austria.

That Festival was brief. It lasted only two weeks, with two operas. The following year the Festival was held for five weeks, and four operas were played. The seating capacity of the opera house was doubled to six hundred. Such was the public response that the third Festival season was completely sold out before the first performance. In 1938 two Italian operas were added: Verdi's *Macbeth* and Donizetti's *Don Pasquale*. The outbreak of war which wrought such havoc in the music world, turned Covent Garden into a dance-hall, and the State opera house in Vienna into a smouldering ruin, naturally closed Glyndebourne. The war over, John Christie turned once more to opera. It had long been his wish to discover outstanding British singers or operas, and his choice fell on a young Englishman, born at Lowestoft, whose new opera *Peter Grimes*, successfully produced at Sadler's Wells, was making musical history. He invited Benjamin Britten to give his second opera at Glyndebourne. And so with *The Rape of Lucretia* the post-war history of Glyndebourne began.

Every year these performances are eagerly anticipated by connoisseurs of opera. John Christie's ambition has been to lift the production of opera in England to a level at which it can challenge all great Continental centres. That proud peak which he visualized has been reached. It is sheer joy to make the annual pilgrimage to this corner of Sussex, where not only can opera be heard at its best, but between the acts you can walk through the summer coolness of beautiful and matured gardens.

## ROYAL ASCOT

ROYAL ASCOT is almost the last stronghold where England is shown to be a monarchical country with an aristocracy. It is Royal. It is aristocratical. That does not mean that it is peopled by the type which Goldsmith described:

“Pride in their port, defiance in their eye,  
I see the lords of human life passing by.”

Such individuals are completely out of date. If anything they belong to Edwardian days. Ascot in essence is much more embrative. It takes in every section of the community commencing with the Queen and Royal Family of England, and gradually absorbs every man, woman and child who has time to make holiday. I know of no other social function which has such contrasts. To watch the pageantry of state as the Royal Procession moves up the course into the enclosure behind the Royal Stand is to witness the spirit of history in motion. Here is a tradition that spans two centuries with three main characters . . . Queen Anne, Dean Swift, and a pretty maid-of-honour.

Ascot came into being at a troubled period of history. The Spanish succession was the cause of a war with France. Whigs and Tories were at loggerheads over the desirability of peace. Scotland and England were eyeing one another with suspicion. In the midst of this international and domestic unrest, the Queen developed a taste for horse-racing. During a drive over the Common at Ascot in the early summer of 1711, she viewed it with an eye as discerning as General Moncrieffe at Westward Ho! and gave orders that a racecourse should be laid out. Shortly afterwards an announcement was made that the Queen had presented a challenge plate. The *London Gazette* of 12th July, 1711, announced that “Her Majesty’s Plate of 100 guineas will be run for round the new heath on Ascot Common, near Windsor, on Tuesday, the 7th August next, by any horse, mare or gelding, being no more than six years old the grass before, as just be





certified under the hand of the breeder, carrying 12 st., three heats, to be entered the last day of July, at Mr. Hancock's, at Fern Hill, near the Starting Post." The races were actually postponed until 11th August, 1711, when Ascot Races were inaugurated by Queen Anne and her suite who drove in state from Windsor Castle.

Swift's connection and the link with the maid-of-honour can be briefly explained. A letter is in existence from Swift to Stella dated 13th August, 1711: "I missed the race today by coming

too late, when everybody's coach was gone, and ride I would not." Yet, on 10th August, 1711, he wrote: "While at Windsor Dr. Arbuthnot, the Queen's physician and favourite, went out with me to show me the place; we went a little after the Queen and overtook Miss Forester, a maid-of-honour, on her palfry, taking the air; we made her go along with us. We saw a place they have made for a famous horse race tomorrow, where the Queen will come." So much for the traditions and façade of convention that constitute Royal Ascot, though we must not forget, as Curling puts it so nicely, that "We owe our thanks to the 'First Gentleman in Europe', who founded the Royal procession when he came to the throne as George IV just over 130 years ago."

As regards the racing, it is the ambition of every owner to record a win on this course, not only because the stake-money ranks as the most valuable in the world, but nothing can equal it as a showground of what Britain can do in breeding and racing. I am not enlarging on the different races that are crammed into this stimulating meeting. There are usually six races each day, making a total of twenty-four, with an overall distance of 29 miles 3 furlongs and 35 yards. This includes the longest flat race in England, the Queen Alexandra Stakes run over a course of 2 miles 6 furlongs and 75 yards. In most people's mind it will always be linked with two names—Brown Jack and Steve Donoghue—a unique combination of skill and stamina that produced six successive wins in this race, the last time being in 1934 when the gallant old horse was ten years of age.

## UNUSUAL LONDON

THE visitor often knows far more about London than the Cockney. The knowledge is usually limited to the obvious "sights" with the result that many interesting and unusual items are missed, though frequently they are within a stone's throw of familiar landmarks. Bond Street may suggest exquisitely dressed women and an air of leisure, essentially modern and twentieth-century, but the next time you pass Sotheby's, glance at the Egyptian carving. It is the goddess Sekhet, which has gazed with inscrutable expression on the changing fashions of 3,000 years. Nos. 147 and 150 New Bond Street could tell many stories. Nelson lived at the former; Lady Hamilton at the latter. Turn into Burlington Gardens and on the right-hand side, just before Vigo Street is reached, an entrance into the Albany, London's most famous block of flats, is seen to have iron gates. They are nothing special, but they have a story. They were erected when Lord Macaulay received an anonymous note informing him that his rooms were to be burgled. The whole thing was a hoax by his niece, but the warning was taken seriously.

Mayfair has many interesting links with the past. No. 4 Chesterfield Street once housed Beau Brummell and tradition declares that the Prince Regent was given many lessons here by Brummell in the art of tying a cravat. Shepherd's Market is saturated with atmosphere. A stone's throw from the sophistication of Curzon Street and Park Lane you find a village street with butchers, grocers and greengrocers, a setting that might have been stolen from a sleepy market town. The impression is no more than surface deep. Walk into the bar of Shepherd's and you find a blasé "local" with brittle humour and fashion-plate styles. The eighteenth-century sedan chair converted into a telephone-box is amusing for those of slim proportions, but the whole atmosphere kills any suggestion of a village community that might fit into the maze of tiny streets. Several shops display handwritten advertisements, again like any general store in a country High Street. The only difference is the wording of the bait.



Every taste is anticipated. Traffic is mainly on foot with habitual pedestrians drawn from ladies of easy virtue who must walk miles every day on their village beat. At least they are in line with a doubtful tradition that has persisted in this neighbourhood for several centuries. In the days of the old May Fair, which was held in the area now occupied by the Market, Curzon Street and Hertford Street, the night air echoed to the bedlam let loose by drinking-booths, side-shows, merry-go-rounds, bull-baiting, and plays. So notorious was its reputation that in 1702 a purity campaign was launched. Many of the prostitutes who frequented the Fair were arrested, but their friends counter-attacked and swept the constables into the sheep-pens where they were pelted with brickbats, so injuring one of them, John Cooper by name, that he died. Popular outcry resulted in the Fair being suspended, so perhaps after all the Market with its multifarious activities could be worse.

Hyde Park Corner is hardly the best place on which to linger. Statistics show that some 80,000 vehicles cross this junction every day. The next time you are in this stream of traffic and you pass under the Wellington Arch, glance at the "Quadriga", those four huge horses. From street-level it is difficult to gauge their true size, but it was possible for the sculptor, Adrian Jones, to have tea with some friends inside one of the beasts. The massive Artillery Memorial that commemorates the 49,076 men of the Royal Artillery who died in the First World War was so designed by C. S. Jagger that its howitzer, if fired, would in theory have found the Somme with its shell. In the Park itself the giant Achilles statue, erected by the ladies of Britain in 1822, had the distinction of being London's first unclad statue.

St. James's Street has its quota of interesting places. Not many people know of the existence of Pickering Place, for this Georgian gem is hidden from sight, but two centuries ago it was a notorious gambling rendezvous and a recognized meeting-place for duelling. If you like occupying the seat of the famous, look in Berry Bros., the wine merchants with a centuries-old tradition, and there you will find scales that have recorded the weight of a long line of famous personalities from the Prince Regent to the present day. A little higher up just past Ryder Street, the famous hat museum of Lock's, the oldest hatters in London, is well worth examining. St. James's Palace is rich in history. Originally



a hospital for women suffering from leprosy, it was converted into a private residence by Henry VIII, served as a prison for Charles I, and the birthplace of Charles II. Close at hand in the Pall Mall—79 to be exact—is a freehold property, the concession being granted by Charles II to Nell Gwyn, who lived here from 1671 to 1687. An echo of the eighteenth century can almost be heard in the delightful shop of Fribourg and Treyer in the Haymarket. Here it was that Peter Fribourg set up business in 1720 and the firm hold ledgers showing that snuff was supplied to such names as George III, George IV, Pitt, and the exiled Napoleon on St. Helena. In Waterloo Place we may locate the mounting-blocks that were put there on the orders of the Duke of Wellington.

Chelsea has a wealth of artistic and literary associations. Cheyne Walk will suffice as an instance. George Eliot lived and died at No. 4; Swinburne, Meredith, and Rossetti lived at No. 16; Whistler sampled many houses, living at Nos. 21, 96, and 101. He died at No. 74. Towards the end of his life Turner lived at No. 119. Close at hand in Cheyne Row is the house where Carlyle lived for many years until his death in 1881. It has been turned into a museum. Should you be of a morbid disposition, turn into Milmans Street, where you will find a Moravian burial ground, with four neat divisions, married and unmarried men and women having their separate enclosures. If such be your taste, then a visit to St. Botolph's in the Aldgate would not be wasted, for there you will find in a glass case the mummified head of Lady Jane Grey's father, the Duke of Suffolk, who was executed on Tower Hill in 1554.

Several items of general interest lie within sight of Marble Arch and along Bayswater Road. For instance, a stone in the road between Hyde Park and Edgware Road is passed unnoticed every day by thousands of people. Few, if any, are aware of the scenes that this site has known, for here is where the Tyburn Gallows stood from the twelfth century until 1759. A little further along Bayswater Road, just past Stanhope Place, is London's smallest house. The frontage is only 3 ft. 6 in. wide. Close to the Victoria Gate is an unusual sight. Towards the end of the last century the Duchess of Cambridge was given permission to bury her dog here. The custom grew and today there must be some three hundred miniature tombstones commemorating the

memory of cats, dogs and birds. To single out a private house for mention usually means that someone of distinction has lived there. Nos. 23 and 24 Leinster Gardens are different in the sense that they are not houses at all. Upon examination they are seen to be only frontages supported by iron girders over the Metropolitan railway. Their purpose was to preserve the good appearance of the street.

The Tate Gallery houses a unique collection of British painting and modern sculpture. The group of French Impressionists ranks among the choicest in Europe. For these art treasures we are indebted to the memory of Sir Henry Tate, who not only gave £80,000 for the building, which was opened in 1897, but donated his own collection as a start. Although the galleries are admirably suited for the display of these art masters, they might well be haunted by unhappy spirits, for the site was formerly occupied by a gloomy penitentiary. It housed some 1,500 convicts and with more than three miles of corridors was the largest prison in England. Its doors finally closed in 1890. Only the gates are left as reminders of its grim reputation, and these can be seen further along Millbank as the entrance to Mr. Speaker's stables.

London through such enquiring eyes can be fascinating . . . often unearthing living survivals in a modern city, improbable links with a remote past.



## LESSONS OF THE CENTRE COURT

THE Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Championships have a tremendous appeal. Invariably the weather is kind and lives up to its calendar reputation. The ground can accommodate 30,000 people each day—the Centre Court alone holds 15,000. Even so, seats are as rare as gold, and as costly if bought from the men who loiter near the main entrance. The interest is understandable, for victory at Wimbledon is still the most coveted honour. Forest Hills cannot hold a candle to the glamour of the Centre Court.

The standard of play is always high. The draw produces a situation pregnant with possibilities. There are the usual upsets—no Wimbledon runs entirely to form—but when the Doherty gates close for another year it is clear that the champions are worthy of their titles. The verdict never changes. Wimbledon remains the finest organized sporting event in the country. The scoring, for instance, on the Centre and Number One Courts is done by means of electrical scoreboards controlled by an operator who receives the score from the umpire over the internal telephone system and transmits it to the scoreboard by means of a machine, which combines the properties of a typewriter and an adding machine. As far as I know they are the only electrical scoreboards in existence for the purpose of recording tennis scores. Even the balls used during the championships are placed in refrigerators on the courts when not in use, to prevent warping of their rubber foundations by the sun.

From the spectator's point of view, Wimbledon provides an object-lesson that an all-court game does not happen by accident. There is nothing haphazard about the stroke production of players like Trabert, Hoad, Seixas, Drobny, Brough, Hart and Connolly. Every detail is under control. Nothing is left to chance. The rhythm of the swing, footwork, balance and weight distribution are impeccable. To study players such as these is equivalent to watching the full range of tennis as played by maybe some forty nations. Yet few take advantage of the lessons

that can be learnt. The reason is simple. The majority of spectators are only affected by the excitement of the hour. The scoreboard registers their reactions. They watch the players, appreciate their skill, possibly identify the strokes, but fail to note the techniques that went into their execution.

Maureen Connolly is an ideal player to study. She has no idiosyncrasy. Her movement and balance are perfect. Her left arm is always poised to balance the movement of her right arm and racket. Her transference of weight is done with such perfection of timing that it is imperceptible to the eye except as a graceful step forward. Then, take the service of Rosewall. The whole action of throwing up the ball and swinging the racket is performed in one simple movement. There is no question of the Australian looking to see where the ball is. The rhythm is known by heart. The timing is automatic. The cannon-ball service of Trabert is worth noting as it zooms flat straight down the middle, picking the chalk off the centre line . . . the real service of a champion.

For fourteen days the finger-prints of style are on view. There is no rigid standardization, for the lawn tennis stroke is essentially individualistic. Allowing for idiosyncrasies, it is interesting and instructive to note which fundamentals are observed by the leading players of each year. A well-worn truism heads the list. Every player watches the ball intently. No one is caught with the head up as the swing develops. There is no attempt to pinpoint the spot where the ball is going to be hit, to locate an opponent before the ball hits the racket-strings.

Footwork comes next. Generally speaking, it is correct to say that the weight should go forward into the shot. That is true of the majority of players, but there have been exceptions. I have seen Seixas, Bergelin, Washer and Larsen over-run the ball with the resulting cramped swing. Not only that, but at times the shot was played off the wrong foot. With lesser players such a stroke would be fatal. Such is the expert's control of footwork and body placement that individualistic improvisation kept the weight in the shot even though the player was caught on the wrong foot. The same can be said about the adage to hit with the body sideways to the net. The advice is sound and should be followed, but such are the Wimbledon styles that no fixed ruling can be made. One feature is common to all the competitors. None appears

flurried or hurried in their shot-making. They position themselves for the stroke without the onlooker appreciating the perfection of footwork, timing and anticipation involved. The top-speed rushing and untidy racket-work of the average player is missing.

We in this country tend to linger with a utilitarian phase of the game. A vociferous school of thought argues that a player's stroke-equipment can be limited to a powerful service and a useful net game. Bludgeoning threatens to oust artistry. Science is neglected for speed and power. A few exceptionally-equipped players may make the grade at Wimbledon and Forest Hills, but the majority of these hit-and-run specialists are lop-sided in their technical equipment. Net attack and a stronger service are only part of an all-court game. Nothing can replace an armoury of sound ground shots as Hoad, Trabert, Hart and Connolly have so often demonstrated.

During the Wimbledon Championships the question is often asked as to how the champions of today compare with those of the past. Such comparisons are difficult and general agreement almost impossible. Jack Kramer has been hailed by some as the world's best player, and his matches in the World Professional Championships tended to support that view. He won at Wimbledon in 1947 against Tom Brown, but against that must be placed his failure in 1946. No sooner has the claim been made than someone will mention Frank Sedgman and put forward arguments of equal strength. But for all-round excellence I doubt whether Big Bill Tilden has ever been equalled. For ten years he never knew defeat in championship or Davis Cup match. He had the build of a champion, huge in stature, but with the agility of a much lighter man. His drawing-power was extraordinary. Like Ben Hogan in golf and Don Bradman in cricket, his personality seemed to over-awe opponents before a ball was struck.

Vines was perhaps the hardest striker of a tennis ball within living memory. He was one of the few players who mastered the art of the unbroken rhythmic swing. His timing was complete, and from start to finish was a perfect example of mind and muscle co-ordination. Fred Perry was outstanding, but his game lacked the finished completeness of Tilden and Vines. He fell short of inspired greatness, and although his game was technically, almost mechanically, correct, it lacked the divine fury of

the natural genius. Rene Lacoste was indefatigable. If history is to remember the Frenchman by one stroke, the choice would probably fall on his back-hand. It embodied the essence of stroke-execution. Lacoste studied his opponents with the thoroughness of a boxer piercing a guard with scientific accuracy. Few men on the Centre Court have shown such calm confidence. His successes in the Wimbledon Singles of 1925 and 1928 were those of a master technician.

Henri Cochet was different. His game was as enigmatic as his personality. Reflecting the insouciance peculiar to France, Cochet was the opportunist of the courts, capable of bringing off the miracle shot and equally capable of playing a stroke that would make a parks player blush. Another man who won two Wimbledon Singles Championships was Gerald Patterson. He is also remembered as winning the Mixed Doubles with Mlle. Suzanne Lenglen. His service at times was as fierce and accurate as Tilden's. Donald Budge was prominent in the years immediately preceding the war, but his domination did not coincide with a vintage period. Greatness in 1938 would have been known by a less flattering description in 1930. Bunny Austin comes under the same heading with one difference. His service was one of the most laboured I have seen on the Centre Court.

As for the women, Suzanne Lenglen used to loom above all others of her sex on the courts until the coming of Maureen Connolly. The French player was the embodiment of graceful perfection, a legend in her own lifetime. Those who saw her Wimbledon successes will recall the sheer artistry of her game. Time alone will show whether the American girl will surpass her unique record. Helen Wills Moody recaptured something of Mlle Lenglen's impersonal greatness, but her game was on a lower plane. And the same can be said of Helen Jacobs, save that her strokes bore a more pugnacious stamp. Kay Menzies likewise touched the hem, and in her instance the emphasis was on feminine charm. In complete contrast Alice Marble personified masculine vigour in her shot-making. Her successors in this respect have been Pauline Betz, Margaret du Pont, Louise Brough, and Doris Hart.

More recent thumbnail impressions recall the boredom of Hoad and Rosewall, the effervescence of Huber, the exuberance of Billy Knight, the courage of Drobny, the sartorial

smartness of Budge Patty, the concentration of Tony Trabert, the flashing Latin smile of Mary Weiss, the rich sun-tan of the competitors, the arrogance of certain officials, the short-sightedness of linesmen that at times suggests mental astigmatism, the ageless youthfulness of Borotra, the magic of the Bath buns that only tempt at Wimbledon, the television commentaries that presume the viewer can locate the ball when invariably it cannot be seen, Maureen Connolly's youthful exuberant approach to the business of winning as with a brisk, meaningful prance she careers with tossing head up and down the court. Nor must I forget the fashions. Wimbledon is a summer carnival against an olive-green setting, the gaiety of a Parisian mirage stealing across the lawns and narrow avenues. Even the men discard the dull shades of the City, whilst women become feminine in waves of fluttering silk. The members of the original All-England Croquet Club at Worple Road, Wimbledon, the forerunners of this international gathering, would have raised their eyebrows in astonishment.

## PUNTS AND PRETTY FACES

EVERY year the miracle happens. The waters of the Thames are changed into a leisured river carnival against an olive-green setting and Henley is transformed into a Parisian mirage. I sat on a canvas chair by the verdant lawns of Phyllis Court and absorbed the scene. It is possible to know nothing about rowing and enjoy every minute of this regatta. I am no admirer of punts. They are singularly unattractive. Their wooden nakedness lacks comfort, yet Henley contrives to vest them with magical qualities. Men from the City become extrovert and blossom forth in a welter of stripes and colours, each representing something to its owner and adding to the general kaleidoscopic blaze of light. The women were like waves of fluttering silk. Behind me came the strains of a military band. The tea-tables by the marquee were crowded with what looked like animated tinsel. In the distance the poplars swayed gently in mild surprise. The Old Blues were the link with reality. Remarkably like Rip Van Winkle, they had the disconcerting habit of peering upstream as if expecting something to happen. Every so often their hopes were realized as the straight line ruling the centre of the river assumed its intended significance. In the distance two eights hissed through the water in split-second co-ordination of effort. Immediately the entire assemblage gave tongue. It was a unique moment . . . a feminine version of Boat Race day. Instead of bustling steamers and chugging launches, there were hundreds of punts locked in a watery embrace. The charm of Paris and the warmth of Nice became stirred by the excitement of oarsmanship.

I thought how Henley came to acquire its specialized reputation, for during the Regency period it combined countrified dignity with regal levity. Frederick, Prince of Wales, had Park Place on the other side of the river, and entertained on a scale only equalled by the masques and balls at Phyllis Court, then jointly owned by Lord Villiers and Lord Grandison. I suppose geographical position added importance to the country town. Midway between Oxford and London, it was a natural half-way house whilst the horses were changed. Lawyer and cleric, scholar



and squire met over a meal. The locals never thought of the stretch of river as having a social side. It was primarily a highway of commerce.

The Henley that I looked upon as the Thames Cup Final was being decided owes its existence to Oxford and Cambridge. I can give the exact time when the birth took place . . . 7.56 p.m. on 10th June, 1829; and the occasion . . . both Universities sending a crew to the river. Reports record that the June day lived up to its calendar reputation. The Master of Balliol tried to kill popular support by announcing a compulsory afternoon lecture on logic. The academic veto failed. By evening the roads were packed with dusty enthusiasts, contemporary chroniclers recording that more than 20,000 people framed the Henley reaches. The Oxford crew took their colours from Christ Church, then head of the river, and dressed in black straw hats, dark-blue striped jerseys, blue handkerchiefs, and canvas trousers. Cambridge had pink sashes over their shirts. Oxford won easily in 14 minutes 30 seconds. A *London Society* writer described the scene: "Never shall I forget the shout that rose among the hills . . . it has never fallen to my lot to hear such a shout since." I only wish he could have heard the cheers that greeted *Leander* as their crew beat the French *Métropolitaine des Transports* to win the Grand Challenge Cup two years running.

When night fell the lawns of Phyllis Court were floodlit. Buildings and terraces gleamed white against the dark background. A girl, swaying her hips like a well-groomed odalisque, wandered into the gold pool with her partner. She looked *Rue de la Paix* against the *High* of her companion . . . no doubt he would eventually discover that every fellow in his year had proposed to her. From the far side of the river came sounds of raucous voices, the wheezy music of merry-go-rounds, and the shrill shrieks of girls on a contraption that almost defied the laws of gravity. The trees were spectral yet the night was warm. Suddenly the sky lit up. The fireworks had begun, and with every flash I saw the crowd standing among the trees or by the water-edge.

Henley is a wonderful festival of Youth with Age joining in with appreciative understanding. If I have to memorize it, I shall murmur, as countless thousands have done before me . . . punts, strawberries and cream, a foam of lace and silk, pretty faces and blue eyes.



## INTERLUDE FOR BALLET

G. K. CHESTERTON once described how he evoked the emotions of a holiday by calling a cab, loading it with luggage, and being driven to the station. Then, having had his sensation, he drove home again. In like fashion the balletomane can recapture something of the exquisite beauty of *Les Sylphides* by hearing an orchestrated version of Chopin's music. The link is natural. Ballet has rightly been termed the ectoplasm of music. In varying degree of sensitivity each is dependent upon the other. In turn, both are linked with further art-forms. Ballet is a fusion of four art-forms . . . dancing, music, drama and *décor*. This fourfold division is frequently overlooked by the general public who regard ballet as beauty in isolation. The tendency is understandable. There is about ballet a grace of movement that calls for no effort of appreciation on the part of the onlooker. Viewed objectively, ballet might be described as one of man's outstanding emotional achievements. Yet such generalized evaluation is foreign to real appreciation which can only be reached by analysing its component parts. In practice it is impossible to isolate one of the four art-forms. Ballet in essence is dependent upon a unity of design. Where that is harmoniously achieved the hem of perfection is touched. But intelligent understanding of what is seen can only come when every aspect is subjected to thoughtful analysis. Ballet is not an easy subject to dissect. There is so much that defies definition. At the outset it is therefore appropriate to quote the definition worded by Arnold Haskell: "Ballet is a form of theatrical entertainment that tells a story, develops a theme, or suggests an atmosphere through the orchestration of a group of costumed dances according to strict rules and guided in tempo and spirit by the music, against a decorative background; music, movement, and decoration being parallel in thought."

The words are heavy but true. Elsewhere I have visualized them in motion in the vastness of Covent Garden . . . that wonderful moment enriching every Season when the lights are lowered . . . the Overture begins . . . and a white wraith of grace

floats across the enormous stage. The audience is usually uncritically appreciative. Applause is generous without considering how the performance should be judged . . . by the dancing, by the music, by the dramatic tension, or by the visual effect?

Let us take music aside and treat it apart. Sir Henry Hadow once described music as poetry expressed through tunes instead of words. He maintained that the highest praise of sound that can be given to a language is that it is musical; that it approximates to a standard which music itself has set. No one can deny the truth of his assertion. Alongside the opening of the Fifth Symphony or Schubert's A minor Quartet the genius of such verbal masters as Virgil or Racine seem rough and cumbersome. There is no limit to the bounds of musical prosody. Every metre is within its compass. In that sense music has a distinct advantage over what are known as the representative arts. The sculptor, poet and painter are circumscribed largely by the impact of life and nature. When they break away from these limitations the result, particularly in art, often ranges from absurdity to monstrosity. Music on the other hand is not necessarily bound by temporal matter. The artist clothes his creation by representation. The musician is not so dependent. The poet is inspired by sense-perception. The medium of his expression is designed for the world of observation. Music is "an inarticulate unfathomable speech which leads to the edge of the infinite and lets us for moments gaze into that".

It is at this point that ballet becomes a visual conception of a musical emotion. Music for the ballet is a thing apart. In practice it is impossible to separate the four art-forms, but viewed solely from the musical viewpoint, certain qualities are essential if a good ballet is to result. There must be a skilful blending of virile treatment, incisive orchestration, dramatic colouring and conscious awareness of the theatre. There are, of course, exceptions to this broad generalization. *Giselle* is an obvious example. This graceful ballet, which has captivated audiences for over a hundred years and been the ambition of every potential ballerina, would not stand an elementary test on the score of musical inspiration. There is only one verdict. It is inferior. And yet, such is the degree of co-ordination that exists between the four art-forms that this weakness has been overcome. The criterion of the concert hall cannot be applied to the music of ballet.

Closer examination of ballet music reveals its mixed parentage. Occasionally there is the direct composition specifically meant for ballet. In this connection the names of Tchaikovsky, Stravinsky and Arthur Bliss come to mind. But there are numerous other instances where the music was never intended for ballet. The translation has fallen to other hands. Three instances suffice . . . a piano fantasia by Schubert—*The Wanderer*—which Liszt orchestrated; the *Dante Sonata* by Liszt, a piano sonata transformed into a concerto; and a classic example in Walton's *Façade*. Another example of music without merit applied to ballet is *Les Patineurs*. Even the most biased admirers of Meyerbeer's work would have to admit that on a musical evaluation his composition leaves a little to be desired. But through the medium of ballet much that might be condemned is overlooked. Its virtues or faults are not judged in isolation. Music as such is a partner of the dance, an equal partner, a conscious role from the moment of its joint inception.

Dancing is thus the visual interpretation of what we hear. The tradition can claim historic precedent as far back as the human race can be traced. The most primitive of tribes have combined ritualistic dancing with crude forms of music. The Greeks were the first to elevate dancing to the point where the human body could execute movements that were aesthetically pleasing to the eye. From time to time attempts have been made to revive the Greek form of dancing. Success has been modified. Without a knowledge of the music used the result can be but a bastard imitation. The art of dancing in Europe was perfected by Italy to whom goes the credit for introducing toe-dancing by which dancers were able to blossom into creatures of unnatural grace and dignity of motion. The tradition of dancing has been influenced by many outstanding individuals. From the purely individualistic point of view Pavlova reigned supreme as a dancer. Her place today has been taken by the incomparable Margot Fonteyn. But for sheer purity of expression the truly great ballerina in every sense of the word was Karsavina. What is not always appreciated by enthusiastic audiences is that in the classic ballets we are actually watching the identical steps which have been taken by a long line of ballerinas. There is this difference. The interpretation breathed into the part is affected by the dancer's reading of the music. Catholicity of interpretation knows

no bounds. If it were not so ballet would be reduced to a soulless sequence of regimented steps.

The part that drama plays in ballet is varied. It ranges from a gentle air of suggestion as in *Les Sylphides* or Frederick Ashton's ballet to César Franck's *Symphonic Variations*, which is void of dramatic programme, to the vivid dramatic score of *The Miracle in the Gorbals*, and the stark drama that runs throughout *Hamlet* where choreographic dramatic rendering is combined with theatrical mastery. Scenery and costume are likewise integral parts in the completed picture. The fusion of music and dancing, sharpened by the edge of drama, is enhanced and rounded-off by the colouring and atmosphere given by the *décor* and costume designer. In this connection the name of Diaghileff will for ever be associated. It was through his influence that conventional standard sets were swept away. Picasso's setting of *The Three-Cornered Hat* is usually quoted as an instance of the marked departure from tradition. From Fokine onwards the designer entered wholeheartedly into the spirit of the hour. Just how far that development has reached is reflected in several recent creations.

Ballet is a visual art. In Sadler's Wells we have the greatest company in the world outside the Soviet Union which presents the great classical ballets in their entirety. Alongside the classical forms there is emerging in this country a more robustious urge to widen the partnership between author, choreographer and composer. We are passing through a phase of choreographic drama being used as a commentary on contemporary life. The purists may condemn the tendency, but it is part of the process by which ballet has become indigenous to these islands. But, whether classical or modern, the setting is perfect for one of the richest moments of the Season.

## FETLOCKS AND WISPS OF STRAW

IT is amazing how in this mechanized age of Delta-shaped, jet-inspired machines the horse more than holds its own in popular appeal. If you have doubts, then go to the International Horse Show at the White City. You exchange the hubbub of city streets for the spirit of the stable, the enthusiasm of the shires, and the thrills of Aintree. Gone is blasé sophistication. Here you are in an atmosphere of fetlocks, nuzzling muzzles, riding breeches and wisps of straw. Spectators are more than casual onlookers. They talk about horses. Many look like horses. Some own horses. Conversation is knowledgeable, outlook single-minded. There is sympathy between men and horses. It is in the air, warming it, as the breath of horses warms the air of stables, leaving no coldness in any corner. I find it difficult to over-emphasize the friendly life which gathers about the horse. It breaks down all barriers of class and prejudice.

Everywhere at White City people are looking at horses. They in turn walk between the men and women, fully aware of their importance and that this Show is theirs. Each year has its quota of lovely memories. The one that I recall most vividly was the first to be held after the war. Here was a part of England that had been kept in cold storage since 1939. There were changes, but the general effect was the same. Visitors had been attracted from all over the world. It was such an easy and painless meeting place for people with a gap of years and the losses and gains that the years hold, lying between this and that last meeting in 1939. The sound-impression of this gathering of horses and men and fashionable women was as familiar as ever. When eyes were closed there came back a sound-track of familiar noises. The rhythmic thud of hoofs, broken at intervals as the horse cleared a jump with the grace of a bird. The shudder of applause as a five-barred gate was carried. A deep voice announcing the number of faults. The whinnying from the stables. Agitated stamping in a horse-box. Since that resumption everything has been the same, each Show as heavenly as the last. There will always be velvety



muzzles reaching over the horse-boxes waiting to be rubbed. Even the sense of smell becomes keener. Certain smells are unmistakable. The smell of a smoking candle after it has been blown out . . . the scent of freshly cut grass, still damp with the morning dew . . . this time, the smell of horse and leather and warm earth churned up by flying hoofs. It is a carnival of single-minded enthusiasm and knowledgeable purpose, almost everybody has a technical appreciation of what they see, so much so that a disinterested onlooker is astonished by the degree of understanding that can exist between man and horse.

This trait is characteristic of England. Love of the horse is a national emotion. That this should be so is interesting when ownership of the horse is confined to a few people. We forget, however, that we are not far removed from the day when it was common for all and sundry to own a horse as a scrutiny of old prints confirms. Up to the 'eighties of the last century every street-print showed a mass of equestrians. Even allowing for artist's licence as regards exaggeration of numbers, it is clear that London streets had their traffic problems even in those days. After that period the prints show a gradual decrease in horse-traffic until they virtually disappear from the scene. Statistics are always dull, but an official count made at Temple Bar between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. in 1850 is not without interest. This shows that 5,000 horsemen were checked. Allowing for the fact that Temple Bar was only one of several busy thoroughfares where a count might have been made, and bearing in mind the possibility that some riders were counted twice on the return journey, the approximate estimate put forward by this contemporary official was that some 25,000 horse-riders exercised their mounts daily in the streets of London in 1850.

The volume of equestrian traffic has dwindled to the point of disappearance. Only in highly specialized settings does an Englishman's love for horses find expression. Some of these are described in other pages, the names themselves giving an indication of the range—Epsom—Ascot—Goodwood—Newmarket; or it may suggest that relaxation of the Season, an early morning ride in the Row, a typical Englishman's attempt to convince himself that wherever he lives he can act as if his entire life was surrounded by the etceteras of country life—horses . . . dogs . . . fishing . . . shooting . . . and a country estate. These thoughts are enjoyed

against a background of park chairs, flower beds, and elms that would look cool and fresh but for the dust of the city. Here is love for the horse in the heart of traffic.

There is, however, an unobtrusive annual event which typifies another aspect of English horse-devotion in quieter fashion. At an early hour—long before the town dweller is astir—two farm horses will set out from the yard. The ploughman and the master go with them. All look fresh and spruced. It is the forerunner of the annual ploughing-match. On other days the routine is monotonous in its regularity. The pattern is familiar. Everybody has seen the mud-bespattered labourer trudging behind two farm horses that plod side by side in the traces. This partnership between man and beast is one that has persisted for generations. Dank manes, muddy fetlocks, and glistening flanks make a traditional picture. But the ploughing match is the equivalent for farm-horse and farm-hand of Epsom, Ascot, or even the International Horse Show. The team eventually comes to a farm where the contest is to be held. An adjoining field sees several other teams preparing for the fray. The half-acre is ploughed with zest and determination. At midday the transformation is carried further. Harness and brasses are cleaned until they reflect the sun. Horses are groomed. Tails are bound with straw. Everything is set for the parade and judging. At sunset comes the return journey. Villagers turn out to watch them pass. In an hour or so the horses will be back in the darkness of their stalls, the occasion perhaps meriting extra oats. The morrow brings the old routine, rough grooming, and heavy work. Thus ends an eventful day for those whose working life lies with horses.

This emphasis on the horse may appear exaggerated. It is not. The stress has been there for centuries. In the fourteenth century the value of a horse was fully appreciated. The station of a man or woman was recognized by the type of horse they rode. Chaucer proves this where he describes how his pilgrims were mounted on their journey from the *Bell* at Southwark. The *Clerk of Oxenford* possessed a horse *as leane as any rake*. The *Ploughman* had a *mere*. The *Wife of Bath* ownde an *amblere*. The *Shipman* from Dartmouth bestraddled a *rouncy as he couth*. The *Knight's* steed was a powerfully built animal. The *Reeve* *sat upon a fit good stot that was all pomely gray, and highte Scot*. Chaucer also tells us in the *Knight's Tale* that the King of Ynde rode a *horse of baye*. The illustrations might



be multiplied several times, but I have only mentioned Chaucer because he is a reliable commentator of his day. The horse in English literature covers an enormous field of enquiry. Shakespeare alone had some 250 references to the horse. The inference to be drawn from this cumulative evidence is that the saga surrounding the horse is an integral part of our national tradition. It is worthy of preservation. The International Horse Show comes as a timely assurance that the tradition will not die.

## ST. JAMES'S STREET

ST. JAMES'S STREET has about it a lasting charm of character and expression. It is a unique thoroughfare, yet not many of those who walk down it are aware of the part it has played for several centuries in our social and political life. To the general public the name of St. James's Street is synonymous with Clubland and the association is appropriate, for here is a street made famous by lineal descent with the coffee houses and taverns of former days. It might be argued that Pall Mall and Piccadilly have prior claim on the grounds of numerical superiority, but on the score of antiquity the contention fails. Neither can point to formation earlier than the beginning of the nineteenth century, whereas St. James's Street is venerable by comparison. It is only necessary to recall some of the earliest dates such as White's (1697), The Cocoa Tree (1746), Boodle's (1762), Brook's (1764), Arthur's (1765), The Conservative (1840), The New University (1863), The Thatched House (1865), The Devonshire (1875), and the Royal Societies (1894).

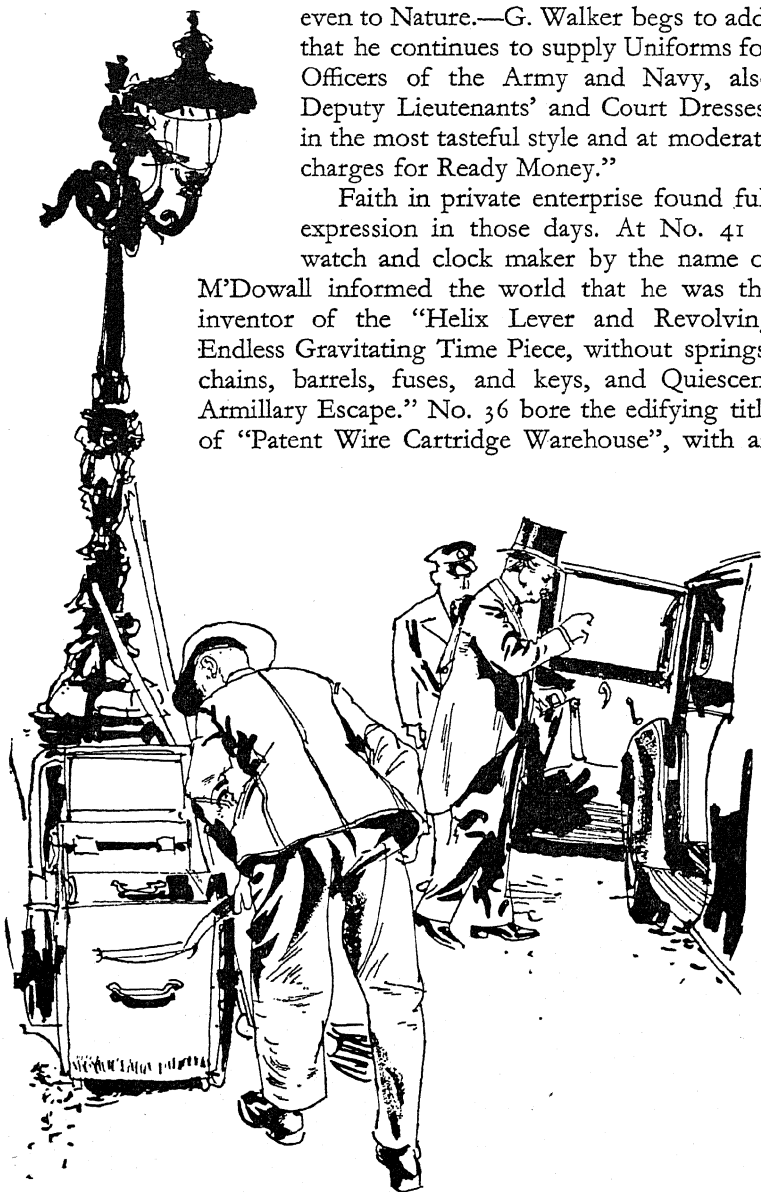
The club tradition is therefore almost as old as the street itself. Evidence put forward by topographers lends support to the view that the street of St. James came into being in the year 1659—a bald statement that by itself is colourless since it gives no indication of what the street looked like, who lived there, or anything about the multitude of people, famous and infamous, ordinary and eccentric, whose way of life linked them with this thoroughfare. An attempt to recapture something of the background atmosphere of the beginnings of this street is interesting, but by no means straightforward. Sources like rate books and the calendar of state papers give quite a lot of detailed information, but generally speaking contemporary writers had little interest in streets of comparatively recent development. Their remarks are largely confined to ecclesiastical buildings and structures of interest from the antiquarian point of view. It is therefore inevitable that the early history of St. James's Street is somewhat fragmentary in character.

The earliest reference I could find is dated 1638. It comes from Sieur de la Serre who, visiting this country in the suite of Marie de Medicis, adds a general comment on St. James's Palace: "Its great gate has a long street in front, reaching almost out of sight, seemingly joining to the fields." Other sources of information suggest a country roadway stretching from the Palace gate to the Way to Redinge, as Piccadilly was then known. Flanked with hedges, it made a typical rustic setting in keeping with Norden's description of St. James's Palace in 1592: "It standeth from other buyldinges, about 2 furlonge, saving a ferme house opposite agaynste the north gate." Thackeray used to say that Hogarth had succeeded in preserving in *The Rake's Progress* something of the atmosphere that then existed by St. James's Palace gate. He declared: "You may people the street, but little altered within these hundred years, with the gilded carriages and throning chairmen that bore the courtiers, your ancestors, to Queen Caroline's drawing-room more than a hundred years ago." But time brought many changes. The tradition remained the same, but the outward appearance had many alterations.

It would be a mistake, however, to imagine that only the famous knew St. James's Street in those early days. The records suggest that all sorts and conditions of men forgathered in the thoroughfare. The east side of the street presented a curious mixture. In 1793 we find Messrs. Lock, the hatters, established at No. 6 with a rival named Caterer at No. 16. A perfumer by name of Walker was his neighbour at No. 7. Berry, a grocer, occupied No. 3. Crellins, a tailor, was in No. 4. No. 8 had Osman Giddy. No. 19 was a glass manufacturer. Nos. 18 and 20 were tailors. Nos. 26 and 27 sheltered William Banting, who was an undertaker and upholsterer. The occupant of No. 33, a tailor and habit-maker named G. Walker, must have been an enterprising gentleman. According to one of his advertisements he has to his credit the distinction of introducing a new method of making trousers. . . . "Trousers on a New Principle—Walker, 33, St. James's Street, has discovered an entirely new principle of Cutting Trousers, and offers to furnish the Nobility, Gentry, and the Public, with this important article of dress, admirably adapted to the display of the figure, and at the same time affording such comfort in all exercises as to insure the highest satisfaction to those who honour him with orders. If Art can give ornament to

Nature, if anything can surpass her in the contour of a limb, it is when cloth is made elegantly to fit the same, then it may fairly be admitted that Art has added a charm even to Nature.—G. Walker begs to add, that he continues to supply Uniforms for Officers of the Army and Navy, also Deputy Lieutenants' and Court Dresses, in the most tasteful style and at moderate charges for Ready Money."

Faith in private enterprise found full expression in those days. At No. 41 a watch and clock maker by the name of M'Dowall informed the world that he was the inventor of the "Helix Lever and Revolving Endless Gravitating Time Piece, without springs, chains, barrels, fuses, and keys, and Quiescent Armillary Escape." No. 36 bore the edifying title of "Patent Wire Cartridge Warehouse", with an



explanatory footnote that "Ely's patent wire cartridges, for shooting game, etc., at long distances, are warranted to make all guns kill from twenty to forty yards further than a loose charge". There was indeed variety of choice. Even the west side of the street, which lacked something of the normal character, had its quota. About 1699, No. 63 was known as Pierault's Bagnio, where jaded humanity could have a cold bath for two shillings and sixpence, whilst a warm one cost twice as much.

So much for the tradesmen who plied their wares for over two centuries in this London thoroughfare. It was the permeation alongside the taverns and coffee houses and clubs, of an assorted sprinkling of perfumers, booksellers, silk-mercers, hatters, carriage-builders, confectioners, tailors—in fact, cheek by jowl almost every need of man was anticipated. And these indeed have been varied. It is only necessary to think of those who have resided or been associated with St. James's Street to realize that here is the meeting-ground for all walks of life. *Habituels* included statesmen and painters, politicians and poets, *roués* and men of letters. It is possible to throng the street with the shades of the great of three centuries. Human frailties and trivialities are self-evident. The appearance of St. James's Street today is sober grey compared with the relaxations of the eighteenth century, a period when this street was at its zenith. Vignettes picked at random indicate something of the richness of the association. It was at No. 8 that Lord Byron confessed he "awoke one morning to find himself famous". The occasion was the publication of the second and third cantos of *Childe Harold*. It was from this same house that Byron left to take his seat in the House of Lords for the first time under singularly unhappy and lonely circumstances. No. 63 was the abode of that celebrated character "Betty", or to give her her real name, Elizabeth Neal. Immortalized by Walpole's *Letters*, her fruit shop was the recognized rendezvous of fashion and politics, wit and beauty, scandal and gossip.

Charles James Fox lodged next to Brook's. Rarely has a man of public affairs been such an inveterate gambler. £154,000 left by his father soon disappeared. Then there was Thomas Worgman, an eccentric goldsmith and jeweller, whose devotion to Kantian philosophy led to such extravagances as publication of books on the subject, a feature of the works being carefully graded colours on each page. The process was so expensive that a volume of 400

pages is said to have cost over £2,000. It is impossible to name those who have strolled down this street in search of convivial company enriched by good wine and food. It has known all the whims of fashion. The days of Brummell, Victorian crinolines, peg-top trousers, swords and patches. Presiding over all has been the warm brickwork of St. James's Palace, which though no longer the seat of the sovereign, nevertheless graces the street of a thousand memories and adds the dignity peculiar to the Court of St. James.

## LORD'S

WE HAVE reached the season of cricketer's plenty. There is a freshness about the game as rare as the grace of an English summer. Lord's and July . . . the month when the velvety bowl of turf becomes timeless. There is continuity of purpose and tradition in the air. The trees . . . the white rails . . . the pavilions . . . the white coats of the umpires . . . the players in chaste flannels—all take on fresh significance. The air is rife with talk of days that have gone. Oxford *versus* Cambridge . . . Eton *versus* Harrow . . . Gentlemen *versus* Players. The first fixture brings out the shades of the past in the semblance of clerics and bishops. Vicarages spill their contents indiscriminately round the ground. Parsons' daughters look demurely sweet. Parsons' wives wear an air of resignation. Parsons strive to recapture and relive their youth. The distinction between immaculate gaiters and shiny trousers is forgotten. The 'Varsity match turns Lord's into a mundane diocesan conference with a democratic veneer.

There is another side to the picture. It is discernible at the 'Varsity match, but most noticeable when Eton meet Harrow. It is then that the miracle occurs. The line of colour that encircles the ground in waves of silk becomes pretty sisters and radiant mothers. In this respect the University match has lost some of its former glory. It is not the social event it used to be. Eton and Harrow is now the fashionable gathering of the cricket season. No one looking at their lanky adolescent escorts would imagine that their forbears could look so attractive. The resemblance between fathers and sons is more noticeable. Both are reserved. The fathers, if anything, look more boyish. As the white-clad players move quietly off for luncheon, the field assumes a variegated pattern. Old Harrovians and Old Etonians roll back the years in search of their youth. These are moments when cricket is more than a game . . . moments that suggest the fragility of days in the sun that can never return. If tradition is to be accepted, this match goes back to 1805, though it is doubtful whether Harrovians will accept this date. It is usually written off as a

holiday game arranged by Kaye for Eton and Byron for Harrow. J. A. Lloyd, the Harrow skipper, said afterwards that Byron did so badly that he should never have been in the side. The criticism seems illogical, for Lloyd had a "couple of ducks", whilst Byron made 7 and 2 (though his own account puts it as 11 and 7). But the evidence is not particularly strong, for the only authority for the score is a half-sheet of notepaper anonymously sent to the Hon. R. Grimston, before appearing in *Scores and Biographies*.

But the true cricketers view the match between the Gentlemen and Players as of even greater interest. This was the match that the M.C.C. chose to mark the centenary of W. G. Grace, and Lord's was appropriately the scene for the commemoration. The very turf of this ground retains something of the spirit of the man it sought to honour. The setting was propitious for his return. A tranquil summer day . . . St. John's Wood and a hansom cab . . . the spirit of cricket incarnate in a massive black-bearded man. The homage was genuine. It was the signal for utterances felicitous and fulsome. Such praise caused the younger generation to ask what lies behind the legend of "W. G.". How would he have compared alongside men like Hobbs, Bradman and Compton. His records have been surpassed. Does this infer that in stature Grace was inferior to those who came after? The question was partly answered by Ranjitsinhji when he evaluated Grace's contribution to the game: "He revolutionized cricket. He turned it from an accomplishment into a science; he united in his mighty self all the good points of all the good players and made utility the criterion of style . . . he turned the old one-stringed instrument into a many chorded lyre." There was something about "W. G." that was as lasting as the reign in which he was born. His influence was so wide that it is difficult to gauge its extent. His first county match was in August 1862 at the age of fourteen. He scored 18 out of 92. At eighteen he scored 224 not out for England *versus* Surrey. His complete record in first-class cricket reads 34,896 runs in 1,388 innings, an average of 39.55. He claimed 2,864 wickets for 17.97 each. These feats between the years 1862 and 1908 placed Grace head and shoulders above his contemporaries.

The spectator is not always aware of the potentiality of the present . . . the fact that history is being enacted in front of his eyes. I would make an exception of the Eton and Harrow match,





for during the three days of freedom from school routine every ball and every hit must be watched. At the age of a schoolboy, cricket can be food and drink. To them this is *the* match of the year. The spaciousness of those simple days must have been the same years ago when the youngsters watched Grace on this very ground. He was the spirit of cricket to the world. He changed the village green into an event of national importance. He spans the gulf between the cricket of the eighteenth century and the game as we know it today. At the beginning of his career the popping crease was cut out of the turf, an inch wide and an inch deep. About forty years earlier over-arm bowling was forbidden. A well-known bowler of that period had been continually no-balled at Lord's for the offence. Bats were made out of one piece. The splice failed to make an appearance for another twenty years. The usual bat was made out of red willow. Batmanship was stereotyped. Forward play with the back foot firmly planted behind the crease was advocated. It was a spin bowler's paradise. By using both feet "W. G." took the sting out of the spin. The

bowler became dependent upon flight. It made little difference to Grace who still disclaimed the efforts of trundlers to dislodge him. The only variation he did not have to tackle was the googly which must not be taken to suggest that he would not have mastered it. "W. G." was a saga that knew no end. Season after season he returned to the sunlit greensward . . . the yellow cap flaming above the black beard that towards the end was flecked with white. He larded the game with his presence until it mirrored something of the English nature.

That is not being hypocritical. It is true. Cricket in its fullness demands the English tongue. It is English to the core. The game comes as natural to a small boy as the air he breathes. A cricket bat is an essential part of childhood, be it rich or poor. It came into being in humble fashion. Whilst concentrating upon the appeal of Lord's and the presiding genius of Grace, we must not be forgetful of those who went before. When, for instance, did cricket begin? The earliest extant score is that of a match between Kent and All England on the Finsbury ground on 18th June, 1744, when Kent won by one wicket. The captain of Kent that day was Lord John Frederick Sackville of Knole, afterwards third Duke of Dorset, who later identified himself with the Hambledon Cricket Club in Hampshire.

Hambledon is usually referred to as the "cradle" of cricket, but the fact that the 1744 match was played against a complete eleven from Kent indicates earlier training grounds. 1744 was an important year. It was then that the first laws of the game were drawn up, although over forty years had to pass before they were officially issued by the M.C.C. London was the recognized centre of cricket. In 1780 the Artillery Fields at Finsbury was succeeded by White Conduit Fields, and here it is appropriate to comment on the origin of Lord's. Thomas Lord was born at Thirsk in Yorkshire on 23rd November, 1755. His father's allegiance to the Young Pretender had adversely affected the fortune of his family at the time of his birth. The position was no better when he finished his education at Diss in Norfolk, so Lord came to London to earn a living. He did well, and became the owner of a flourishing wine business and a professional cricketer of promise. In 1786 he was consulted by Lord Winchilsea and the Fourth Duke of Richmond about a new ground for the famous White Conduit Club, whose members were anxious to leave the Islington

ground. Their proposition covered Lord against any financial loss. Lord agreed and completed a deal with the Portman family for the "Mary-le-bone Field", which lay north of the Marylebone Road, on the present site of Dorset Square.

The first match was played in May 1787 between Middlesex and Essex for 200 guineas. At the end of that season it seemed that the White Conduit Cricket Club merged with the recently formed Marylebone Cricket Club. There is an element of doubt about that date, but none about the Marylebone Club's first match. That was on Lord's Ground in the open country in May 1788. The change was successful. In 1800 we find references to crowds of five thousand paying sixpence to watch the matches. The attraction was largely gambling. Bookmakers used to shout the odds opposite the pavilion. The main matches often had stakes as high as a thousand guineas a side.

The spirit of the meadows matured slowly. The lusty humour of the village green has changed into a game of science, but the appeal of Lord's remains just as strong and unsophisticated. There are few things so precious to the cricketer as the recollection of a lazy July morning at Lord's, umpires moving slowly, white-flannelled fieldsmen, the trees at the Nursery End glistening in the sun, the rhythm of a flashing bat, and the prospect of luncheon with perhaps cold salmon . . . strawberries and cream . . . quails in aspic. Here was fare to be equalled only at Ascot. Old Etonians of eighty look at peace with the world. Corks are a-popping. Spectating after the luncheon interval can be a mellow business on this cricket field that transcends the bounds of county ties.

## FEMININE WILES

THE lengths to which women will go in order to draw attention to themselves is a phenomenon that men find difficult to understand. Some time ago I heard of a female who had been seen walking down Bond Street with a live mouse in her hat. The tiny rodent was imprisoned in what was described as a pill-box of transparent plastic and was clearly visible to the passer-by, whom it, for its part, was in a vantage point to eye as it travelled impressively through their midst like a miniature maharajah on a very large elephant.

A moment's reflection indicates the advantages of such a novelty. The female had solved the nightmare of how to begin a conversation with a stranger, be it at Henley, Wimbledon, or any of the colourful events of the Season. No longer need the interesting man sitting near her at luncheon be at a loss for something to say. Even the dullest cricketing bore could sparkle. The flow need not be one-sided, for though he might be intrigued by her fatuous answers to his questions, she in turn could be scarcely less interested in what her invisible pet was doing in its little conning-tower. Altogether a novel twist to the instinctive underlying motive that hides behind the feline amatorial approach during the campaigning weeks of the Season.

The signs are not confined to Bond Street, for only a small percentage of the female population has the time to indulge in a summer of languorous sophisticated interludes. Even so, there is a tendency for those whose spare time is limited to skirmish round the fringe of the Season. After all, only the race-course at Ascot separates jellied eels from champagne. Those on stand and heath enjoy equally the excitement and urgency of the moment. Many a female adds inches to her imaginary status by cultivating an air of social superiority when returning to her employment after one of these jaunts. It adds an edge to her matrimonial skirmishing, which always seems to become intensified during these weeks of general social activity. The pattern is more or less orthodox and familiar to all except the unfortunate



At Henley men become extrovert and blossom forth in a  
welter of stripes and colours, whilst women are like waves  
of fluttering silk



victim, who eventually may imagine that he is in love. The symptoms are unmistakable. He becomes egotistical and deludes common-sense into believing that the woman of his choice wants to marry him for himself alone, a naïve outlook due to lack of understanding of the feminine approach to the subject. Women may say that the topic is not one for cynical levity. My contention is that it is about time that a mere male told these ladies something of the truth of their own motives.

No doubt there are variations to the theme. Techniques change, but as one grows older there is neither the time nor the desire to keep abreast of the latest developments. By convention we are conservative in habit. The link between this topic and the London Season may seem slender, but the influence of the latter is so persuasive and widespread that for the sake of potential male victims the symptoms ought to be enumerated and analysed. Some of the categories seem to vary little, one in particular—the secretary-type—hardly alters at all. Invariably shrewd, she approaches her career in scientific fashion. Knowing that such work can only result in a curved spine and ever-spreading hips, the time spent on such unfeminine activities must be made as short as possible, otherwise the chances of her appearing at Phyllis Court during the Royal Regatta in anything less than a bathchair are slight. An obvious solution is a brief private secretarial career. The main thing is to avoid the typing-pool, that stuffy cemetery of unmarried drones. Sympathy for these females is often wasted. Many are content with their working-heaven, provided they have never heard of the text which informs us that there shall be no marrying in heaven. A few solace themselves with the thought that if only some high executive could see them, all would be well. The odds are that the fellow has already inspected them from afar, hence the relegation to earphones and wax cylinders.

Becoming a private secretary to a lonely chief executive calls for special qualities. Getting him to approve across a wide expanse of shining desk is only the beginning. It is here that some of the tricks practised by women on their escorts at Wimbledon, Lord's and Henley can be of use. The right facial expressions must be practised, likewise postures and hand-movements . . . the last-named can be copied from the artistic contortions seen in the viewing galleries of the Royal Academy. Hair, teeth, and figure

need constant attention. Extravagance with hosiery and the right kind of perfume is more important than mastering the rudiments of shorthand and the mysteries of the typewriter. Having completed such formalities, the female sizes-up her employer. A safe assumption is that however brilliant may be his reputation as a businessman, he is first of all a man, with many vulnerable, probably adolescent, sides to his nature. All these will emerge once she gets him alone in his private office.

An experienced female knows all the moves. Every employer comes under the heading of an occupational risk, for there is no guarantee that he will react favourably to the sudden urge to sew a button on his jacket, in short, the psychiatric, almost confidante approach. An elementary move is to adopt the trick used so effectively on the river. A female draped elegantly on the cushions of a punt suddenly ceases to notice the distractions of May Week, and gazes with what she imagines is rapt admiration at the perspiring male who is struggling to master the current, control the ungainly pole, and avoid getting his slacks drenched with water every time he lifts the cumbersome object out of the river. Similar tactics in the office consist of gazing at an employer when he is dictating so as to register signs of awe or appreciation at relevant passages. The slogan of most women during the Season, whatever their activities, is that it always pays to flatter by inference. The private secretary soon discovers that if her nose is stuck in the note-book, the only things that register are her ears, by no means the most potent part of her anatomy. But if progress goes to schedule, the dictation part of the work should soon be reduced to a minimum. The few letters that have to be written should be placed before him immediately he comes in from lunch. A fountain-pen that works is handed to him so that the impact of hands lasts a split-second longer than is necessary . . . an old move equally effective with wine-glass, magazine, or anything suitable that happens to be around. One thing must be remembered . . . a sweet innocent look is essential. The expression often requires considerable practice to look convincing. The main thing is not to over-do it.

Another line of approach is to cultivate the personal interest. Every big executive has some form of occupational disease. Quite likely a lively imagination stimulated by one of the many sporting events making headline news will attribute his complaint



to past participation in such athletic tests. The main thing is never to suggest that they are weaknesses or infirmities, only indispositions that need vitamin-pills, hormones, and the attention of a young healthy secretary.

The question of personal appearance is important. Few men expected to see the day when women would get sunburned in the places they do now. Such extrovert gestures must be controlled. In spite of the dictates of fashion most employers prefer their private secretary to be adequately clad. The art of smiling ranks high on the list, only many fail to make sure that their make-up matches the expression. Only experience and a few setbacks can convince that an over-daubed mouth and badly tinted hair have a peculiar effect on some employers.

Some secretaries gain the reputation of being brilliant conversationalists. The secret is simple and can be seen in operation at almost every function associated with the Season. It can be adapted for almost any sphere of feminine operation. The woman seldom talks and becomes a sympathetic listener. General topics are avoided. Every subject must be personal and intimate. In the case of the designing secretary the answers take longer and the artificial relationship of employer and employee disappears quicker if his interests, hobbies and weaknesses are discovered, and wondering questions are asked of the oracle. The main thing is to let the man talk. It is here that expression is important. Generally speaking, provocative eyes and wrinkled-up nose are usually effective, provided she remembers to keep the lips slightly parted, with the body leaning a trifle forward. The pose needs practice, otherwise the result looks somewhat silly.

There are alternatives. She can become a manicurist, when hands can be held from the outset, or perhaps an authoress . . . but second thoughts suggest that after all no intelligent women ever work . . . at least during the Season . . . they leave that to men.

## A DAY AT THE RACES

A VISIT to Newmarket is an experience in itself. The spirit of the stable is everywhere. I arrived before the July Stakes, a race instituted in 1786, the oldest two-year-old event in the calendar, run over 5 furlongs 140 yards on the summer course at the First July Meeting, and found myself in a world of fetlocks. The town exuded a companionable atmosphere. I walked over the Lime Kilns before the world was awake. The brooding silence that marks the interlude between night and day was everywhere. The murmur of a distant clock reminded me of the chiming clock of Melton Mowbray. The stillness was further disturbed by the first drowsy notes of a thrush. And then—like the spirits of the Heath—a string of thoroughbreds with foam-flecked bits and rippling muscles emerged from the mists with smooth sweeping strides. Festoons of breath lingered in the air. The thud of hoofs grew faint, and the vision faded into the grey silence.

The racecourse was deserted. Birds were running over grass that would soon be thick with people. The white rails were oblivious to their significance. The empty stand looked unconcerned. Even the winning-post was unaware of the part it was to play. The fact that thousands of pounds would change hands because of its existence was of no consequence. The entire place was blissfully unconscious of its significance, and yet the very earth was larded with history. I thought of the relics preserved in the Jockey Club. Democracy has been called the greatest common factor of the greatest common envy. Cynics may dispute the fact by retorting that democracy is merely a state in which you say what you like, but do what you're told. Be that as it may. In the world of sport it is an indisputable fact that the Jockey Club is the greatest common factor of the greatest common envy. It is worthy of comment if only because so few people know anything about it. As long ago as 1777 a writer said that "it modestly turns its back upon the street, as if to shun the public view in silent retirement". I looked at the buildings. It would be difficult to improve on the description. The Jockey Club is extremely

conscious of its position as the ultimate authority of the racing world. It is conservative, exclusive and dignified.

Personally, I couldn't care less what it looks like outside. I am far more interested in the interior. To anyone who is sensitive to tradition, the place is teeming with associations. Take, for instance, "The Whip". It is alleged to have been given by Charles II. An unusual feature about it is the wristband which is woven from hairs taken from the tail of *Eclipse*. A hoof mounted on a gold salver is a companion relic presented by William IV. In themselves they are trifles, yet they preserve a link with the most celebrated horse in the history of the Turf. When I see them I like to think of a certain night two centuries ago on the Duke of Cumberland's breeding establishment at Cumberland Lodge in Windsor Great Park. It was the night of the great eclipse of 1764, a night that had the country folk uneasy and apprehensive. During it, a mare foaled, and, not unexpectedly, the youngster was named *Eclipse*. The horse was not run in public until the age of five. A salesman bought him as a yearling in Leadenhall Market for 75 guineas. He won his first race in May 1769—the commencement of a racing career in which he was never beaten, or even extended. At stud *Eclipse* was the sire of 335 winners, who won approximately £160,000 in stakes alone between the years 1774 and 1796. Fees from the horse's services as a stallion brought close on £25,000. In direct descent, a yearling filly realized 10,000 guineas . . . a racehorse in training was bought for £39,375 . . . and two sires produced stock that won over half-a-million sterling. No other English horse can claim such a record.

Another whip recalls the magnetic hands of Fred Archer—hands that guided 2,748 mounts past the winning-post. I like to think that this was the whip that delivered two ugly welts fifty yards from the post and goaded *Melton* to snatch the Derby from *Paradox*. But mental pictures soon give way to the genuine paintings that hang on the walls, where, in a few minutes, you range from the days when jockeys rode with long leathers to the present pulled-up stirrups. If I had to pin-point one canvas, I should plump for the painting by John Wotton. His subject was the dour puritanical gentleman named Tregonwell Frampton, the "Keeper of the Running Horses to their Sacred Majesties" during the reign of William and Mary, and trainer to Queen Anne, George I and George II. Had I to write his epitaph, I would have

immortalized him as the first professional trainer and an intense woman-hater.

I find it difficult to visualize the part that Newmarket once played in the affairs of State. The streets are hardly romantic. No doubt it is a wealthy town, but, on the surface, it is dull and pedestrian. A few minutes' walk by the shops in an afternoon makes it hard to believe Macaulay's words: "It was not uncommon for the whole Court and Cabinet to go down there, posting in a single day." When Charles I was reigning, Newmarket was literally the administrative capital of England. The streets were then alive with colour. I can do no better than re-quote Macaulay: "Jewellers, milliners, players and fiddlers, venal wits and venal beauties, learned doctors from Cambridge and fox-hunting squires with their rosy-cheeked daughters." Life in Newmarket in those days was far from dull. Any gambler would have been happy in the *salon* of the Duchess of Mazarin. It was accepted as an integral part of Court life and was noted for the attractiveness of this niece of Cardinal Mazarin. A rival attraction was the gambling-house run by Lady Castlemaine, another royal mistress of remarkable beauty. Pepys commented on it when he wrote in 1668: "I was told tonight that my Lady Castlemaine is so great a gamester as to have won £15,000 in one night, and lost £25,000 in another night, at play; and hath played £1,000 or £1,500 at a cast." I am afraid that anyone who wants entertainment on such a scale has arrived three centuries too late.

The Newmarket Sales were interesting. A circle of potential bidders watched with discerning eye as a stable-lad led a thoroughbred racehorse into the ring. The auctioneer cajoled the first bid. Catalogues were studied to confirm the claim to equine aristocratic blood. The bidding starts with a surreptitious raising of a hand. An impassive wink cancels it out. A grimace raises the price even further. The eventual home of the horse trembles in the balance until the sharp crack of a tiny hammer closes the deal in incisive fashion.

There was a democratic breeziness about the crowds on the Heath for the big race. Those near the rails could hear the sound of thudding hoofs on yielding earth and clinking bits as the lord of the Turf, wide of nostril, went past with aristocratic grace. Somewhere in the distance a long, slender line was taking shape. Thousands of tongues were silent. The tension was tangible.

Then came the exciting moment when the bookmakers were silenced by the shout . . . "They're off!" It was a cry of expectancy that rose in crescendo as the line took shape. The huddled jockeys came into closer view, resplendent in vivid colours, borne like a wave of silk against a background of thundering hoofs. The roar increased in volume as the horses came by the stands, until finally the incoherent torrent of sound took shape and formed the name of the winner.

## A DAY ON THE THAMES

A DAY on the Thames can be delightful, the only drawback being that quite a number of other people will probably have the same idea if the queues that form by Westminster Bridge are any guide. Still, it is possible to miss the congestion by making an early start in a boat loaded with provincial and overseas visitors. Even before we lose sight of the dome of St. Paul's, it is a good idea to rub up our knowledge of the past history of London's waterway. Not for nothing did John Burns call its sluggish waters "liquid history". Its influence has touched almost every part of our national life. The Victory Pageant, for instance, after the last war revived the role the Thames has so often played in national pageantry for the centuries have seen innumerable royal processions by barge, each invested with quiet dignity. One of the most solemn was when Queen Elizabeth's body was taken by water from Richmond to Whitehall. The occasion was commemorated by the familiar lines by William Camden:

"The Queen was brought by water to White-hall,  
At every stroke the oars did tears let fall:  
More clung about the Barge, fish under water  
Wept out their eyes of pearl, and swom blind after.  
I think the Barge-men might with easier thighs  
Have row'd her thither in her peoples' eyes.  
For how so ere, thus much my thoughts have scan'd  
She'd come by water, had she come by land."

The impact of the Thames on our pastimes is more marked. Before the Season begins the Boat Race has held the stage as the first important event of the year. From Putney to Mortlake the banks were lined with thousands of partisan spectators, the majority of whom had only the faintest idea what Oxford and Cambridge looked like. But the summer provides a different type of boat race. The course is from London Bridge to Chelsea. It is rowed by Thames watermen. The prize is Doggett's Coat and

Badge—an orange-coloured coat and silver badge after the wishes of Thomas Doggett, a comedian of repute who inaugurated the race in 1716. Henley, as described elsewhere, recalls vibrant summer afternoons, velvety lawns, punts sprinkled with colour like living confetti, whilst the Fourth of June has memories for many of Eton in all its youthful seriousness, even during the Fireworks.

Regattas have for long formed one of our quieter national pleasures. The first one held in England took place on the Thames in 1775. The idea, taken from Venice, was received with enthusiasm by Londoners. The record preserved in the *Annual Register* throws light on details of the occasion: "On Friday, the 23rd of June, preparations were made in the morning for the celebration of this long-expected show. Before noon several of the companies' and great numbers of pleasure-barges were moored in the river, with flags, etc. Half-a-guinea was asked for a seat in a common barge. Early in the afternoon, the whole river from London Bridge to the Ship Tavern, Millbank, was covered with vessels of pleasure, and there seemed to be a general combination to make a gay evening. Scaffolds were erected on the banks and in the vessels; and even on the top of Westminster Hall there was an erection of that kind. Vessels were moored in the river for the sale of liquors and other refreshments. Before six o'clock it was a perfect fair on both sides of the water, and bad liquor, with short measure, was plentifully retailed. The avenues to Westminster-bridge were covered with gaming-tables . . . Soon after six, drums, fifes, horns, trumpets, etc., formed several little concerts under the several arches of the bridge. At half past seven the Lord Mayor's barge moved, and falling down the stream made a circle towards the bridge, on which 21 cannons were fired as a salute: and just before it reached the bridge the wager boats started, on the signal of firing a single piece of cannon. They were absent nearly fifty minutes and on their return, the whole procession moved in a picturesque irregularity towards Ranelagh."

The aesthetic appeal of the Thames is strong. It has been noted by many famous names of the Arts. It caught the eye of John Ruskin, who often stayed at the *Crown and Thistle* at Abingdon. Spenser expressed his thoughts in *Prothalamion* in exquisite fashion. Shelley's vibrating poem described his impressions as he traced the source of the Thames from Windsor.

Macaulay described the Thames as gliding "under woods of beech round the gentle hills of Berkshire". More recently Robert Bridges added his quota of praise from his home at Boar's Hill. When Cowley died in Chertsey, his body was taken to Westminster Abbey on the river that meant so much to him during his life. Two hundred years ago Twickenham was the hub of an artistic community that included Lady Mary Wortley Montagu; Thomson and Gay, the poets; Pope; Walpole; Kitty Clive, the actress, and Dean Swift. The following century saw Tennyson living in Montpellier Road. Dickens introduced the Thames in *Our Mutual Friend* and *Great Expectations*, whilst Bill Sikes's progress to Chertsey is marked with intimate knowledge of the route. The impressions gained by Peter John Grosley on his visit to London in 1765 drew attention to the difficulty of getting an uninterrupted view of the Thames "unless I entered the houses and manufactories which stand close to the river". He decided that the refusal to widen the vista was due to "the natural bent of the English, and in particular of the people of London, to suicide", which he ascribed to "the melancholy which predominates in their constitutions".

Architecturally, the Thames can more than hold its own. Royal palaces have risen on its banks. During the reign of James I the list included Hampton Court, Windsor, Richmond, Oatlands, Whitehall, Greenwich, Westminster and the Tower of London. Private mansions would include Clivedon, Nuneham Park and Mapledunham House. Defoe's praise is understandable . . . "from Richmond to London, the river sides are full of villages, and those villages so full of beautiful buildings, charming gardens, and rich habitations of gentlemen of quality that nothing in the world can imitate it".

The bridges that span the Thames are a subject apart. The majority of the London ones are comparatively modern. Waterloo Bridge takes the place of Rennie's elegant structure. His bridge at Southwark has also been replaced. Eighteenth-century architecture concentrated on grace at the expense of strength. Robert Milne built Blackfriars Bridge in pleasing fashion, but the stone was not durable enough to last even a century. Richmond Bridge was erected in 1780, but had to be widened. Westminster Bridge, originally built by the Swiss architect, John Labelye in 1750, like the others, had to be replaced. For antiquity it is necessary to go



to the upper Thames where New Bridge can claim to be thirteenth century, likewise Radcot, whilst the most beautiful bridge might be claimed by Magdalen, Oxford.

The tributaries of the Thames flow through many kinds of countryside . . . Cotswold, Oxfordshire, Wiltshire Downs, Berkshire, Surrey, Kent, Hertfordshire, Chilterns and Essex. The Kennet would be my choice, mainly through its famous trout fishing, but for historic interest I turn to the tributaries that used to flow through London. They are still there, only engulfed by bricks and mortar. The Tyburn can be traced under Oxford Street, Brook Street, Mill Street, Green Park, and eventually finished in the lake of St. James's Park. The Westbourne can be followed from Paddington to the Serpentine. The Fleet rose near Ken Wood and went through Kentish Town, Camden Town, Kings Cross, Clerkenwell, Holborn Bridge and Fleet Street before joining the Thames by Blackfriars Bridge. Originally the river was navigable up to Holborn Bridge, but silt and filth closed it several centuries ago. Dean Swift's comments were doubtless earned:

"Drowned puppies, stinking sprats,  
all drenched in mud,  
Dead cats, and turnip tops, come  
tumbling down the flood."

It is essential to know something of a London long past if a journey down Thames is not to be dull. Landmarks seem to be gloomy warehouses and dismal streets, but how many know that Cherry Garden Pier is a link with the days when Pepys knew it as an attractive orchard. Bermondsey is hardly inviting, but in that district we would find Crucifix Lane, which recalls the Holy Rood of the long-departed Abbey, and Jamaica Road, where Pepys used to find entertainment, whilst Spa Road is a link with the tiny spa and its chalybeate spring which Thomas Keyse, the artist, opened about 1770. Looking at the scene it is difficult to realize that crowded boats used to carry people from London to enjoy their tea and firework displays in this little spa. Some associations are less pleasant. The Tunnel Pier at Wapping is the scene of the Execution Dock where pirates went to the gallows. After being hung, the corpses were flung into an iron cage which swung in

the river until immersed by three tides. Such was the fate of Captain Kidd after attempts to hang him had failed through the rope being faulty. The *Newgate Calendar* carries a footnote referring to his death: "In cases of this distressing nature and which hath often happened to the miserable sufferer, the sheriff ought to be punished. It is his duty to carry the sentence of law into execution, and there can be no plea for not providing a rope of sufficient strength."

The river folk have their own London—their own traditions—their own superstitions. It is a world quite apart wreathed in the mists that have always cloaked the waterways of London.

## A DAY IN BED

IT is stupid to say that frailties disappear as we get older, for old men do not grow wise. Men never grow wise. True indeed is the proverb that says, "There is no fool like an old fool." I would go further. No fool is half so happy in his own fool's paradise. The young have frailties that never come to fruition. The old have reminiscences of what never happened. I suppose it is only the middle-aged who are truly aware of their limitations. In the middle years a weakness is a weakness, not a playful eccentricity. To one weakness I will confess . . . a weakness shared by many during the hectic pace set by the Season . . . I love to lie lazily in bed in the morning. There is no need to have a thermometer. The thermometer can prove me an impostor. It worries me not, for here is the epicurism of pleasure. My head supported by pillows, the bed-light casting a warm glow, household duties sounding faintly in the distance. Even the telephone bell is powerless to irritate. It merely emphasizes a blissful state. Whoever wants to speak will have to fade into reproachful silence. It will not be answered. Nothing is going to interrupt the seclusion of a world of soft down, box springs, and sheets.

Should any churlish reader hint at laziness, my retort is that time spent in bed is not necessarily wasted. Milton composed much of *Paradise Lost* in bed. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu received poets in like state. Hobbes executed mathematical problems on the sheets. Samuel Pepys enjoyed rising late. Samuel Johnson had a lifetime habit of staying in bed until two. Early to bed and early to rise is supposed to ensure health, wealth, and wisdom. I disagree. Russell Green was nearer the mark when he said that the illusion of virtue convinces too many that by going to bed at ten and rising at seven they are the moral superiors of people who go to bed at twelve and rise at nine. Going to bed can be a nocturnal pleasure, but there is no reason why getting out of it should be enforced by the clock.

I admit that the situation is entirely different when we are confined to a sick bed. No one enjoys being ill. Over such sad

occasions if they should occur during the Season it is better to draw a veil. Instead, I turn to the period known as convalescence, when, although better, we are still objects of commiseration. In short, we can enjoy, if not revel, in the attention of ministering angels. But there are times when we are left alone. It is then that contemplation comes into its own. How are we to while away the hours? The sun may be shining, and we know that only a few miles away the lawns of Wimbledon are crowded, Henley is like animated tinsel, the Nursery End at Lord's is beckoning, and a substitute has to be found for your match at Sunningdale. Reading is the obvious answer, but the choice is all-important. Newspapers are anathema. The redeeming feature of being a prisoner in bed is to escape from reality. Cold newsprint with depressing headlines is not the way to relax. Essays, verse, history, and *belles-lettres* plough too deep a furrow in the brain. Something lighter is indicated, a book by an author with a smooth touch, like Mr. Charles Morgan, who is said to have acquired the knack of combining a trace of lust with an abundance of spirituality in quantities calculated to provide the maximum of titillation with the minimum of self-reproach. Such a book may not be somni-facient, but it will command attention in subtle fashion.

Next in importance comes the question of the best way to read in bed. Large books are ruled out. These tomes require two hands. One of the niceties of this pastime is to keep one hand warm under the clothes whilst the other does the work of turning the pages, albeit with the aid of the nose. As to the ideal position, no fixity of opinion exists. To lie flat on one's back or curled up on the side are but two of several variations. Reading in bed has been described as one of life's purest pleasures, but many problems have to be solved before the art is mastered.

But one grows tired of reading, and the range of alternative entertainment is limited. I remember a light essay on this subject from the pen of Mr. Bernard Darwin about twenty years ago. He claimed that given the right conditions, there are few pleasanter things than a day in bed. His proviso was that we must be just ill enough to be sure that we shall be nearly well next day, and whilst not equal to gross roast beef, a whiting sympathetically eating its own tail can be taken, with perhaps rice pudding sprinkled with brown sugar to follow. In that serene state, Mr. Darwin found himself, as befits a golfer of eminence, playing on

the links of eiderdown. Of the existence of such a course there is no doubt. A state of delirium is not necessary to walk its fairways.

I put it to test during an attack of influenza, an attack that came in the middle of the Wimbledon fortnight, hence the reason for this chapter. The eiderdown was indeed an expanse of natural, undulating golfing country. Golfers will know what I mean when I say that by slightly raising a knee the famous Road Hole of St. Andrews came into being. There were the Sheds with the nearby Cheape's bunker. Never have I played this hole so well. My drive was not quite so far to the left as usual, and instead of playing my second to the right with a chip to the green, I risked the dangers of having to pitch back from the road by going all out for the green with a long raking shot. I believe it was Mr. H. N. Wethered who said that a fluke by an afterthought can with little exercise of the imagination very soon assume the proportions of a masterpiece. It was true in this case. I ignored the Scholar's bunker, the Road bunker, the dreaded road itself, and watched the ball sink to rest on the velvety carpet about a foot from the pin.

A twist of the knee and the architecture changed. Bunkers became cops, Scotland became England, and I was standing on the seventh tee at Hoylake, about to play what I consider to be one of the finest short holes in the game. Sure enough, there was the out-of-bounds turf wall hugging the narrow green on the left. It brought back the recollection of an Open Championship of more than twenty years ago, when a well-known British professional played a high shot which struck an innocent spectator on the head, rebounding from out-of-bounds to within a yard of the pin. Here was tragedy in the making, but golfers are made of stern stuff. Without so much as a glance at the unconscious victim, the putt was holed, and the great man strode off to the next tee. This time I played a crafty shot. The ball kept low, dexterously avoiding the rushes in front of the green, and finished close enough to the pin to be sure of a flawless 2.

Non-golfers will regard such mental gymnastic as a sign of retarded adolescence. No doubt in workaday life the fabric of such a dream would be suspect, but in a convalescent state much can be forgiven. Sir Walter Simpson, who wrote so charmingly about the game last century, had many amusing phrases and lines to his credit. One I enjoy was his claim that to have a bunker

named after you is a *monumentum aere perennius*. The recollection of a magnificent recovery I made from a bunker formed by an upward movement of the toes has left a thrill of cloying quality. Here, indeed, was the type of shot by which holes and bunkers are christened and remembered. But such dreams must come to an end. The day dawns when tobacco no longer tastes like hay. The prerogatives of a sick bed no longer apply. We cannot cosset ourselves on the memory of what has been. To stay in bed would be shameful. In a few hours we will be back in the old routine amid the chit-chat and excitement of the Season, and agreeing more than ever with Mr. Somerset Maugham's verdict: "It was a wise man that recommended men, for their soul's good, to do each day two things they disliked. And it is a precept that I have followed scrupulously: for every day I have got up and I have gone to bed." No spell can stand up to rude health.

## THE GOODWOOD SETTING

IT is somehow appropriate that the Season, which began in May with the opening of the Royal Academy, should draw to a close against the leafy background of Charlton Woods and the Downs, the setting for Goodwood, the loveliest of our race-courses. For many parents the break is welcome. Three months' campaigning to capture the marriage-market with a selling-plate filly is not easy. The programme at least has been varied. Now it is the Downs and valleys of Goodwood for what King Edward VII described as a garden-party with racing tacked on.

Racing at Newmarket is a business; at Goodwood it becomes a leisured pastime. On Trundle Hill the crowd is in holiday mood. Everything and everybody help to soften the blow of losing. Historic facts can be dull, but those linked with Goodwood are not without interest. Here was the scene of a unique hunt. On 26th January, 1738, a dawn meeting at Charlton saw hounds locate an old bitch fox in East Dean Wood shortly before eight o'clock. Ten hours five minutes later the kill was made a couple of miles north of Arundel.

Those of us who enjoy the racing at Goodwood should raise a glass in memory of the third Duke of Richmond and Gordon. The prototype of the Goodwood Cup took place in the spring of 1801, when the Duke gave permission for members of the Goodwood Hunt and officers of the Sussex militia to run a number of two-mile heats. The following year saw the first public Goodwood race-meeting, when sixteen races were run in three days for £1,001 prize-money—a different proposition to the present financial bait, when twenty-four races are worth roughly £29,000 to the winners. There were several phases in the actual development of the racecourse itself. One of the most remarkable was inaugurated by Lord Cavendish-Bentinck—the peer who won a race at Goodwood in 1824, when the riders wore cocked hats. The last half-mile provided doubtful running in dry weather. Bentinck gave orders for the turf to be covered with several inches of mould topped by turf with the grass downwards, then

a layer of soil with a final covering of turf. Nowadays, large-scale constructional alterations can be taken for granted. The miracle of Turnberry in Scotland reclaiming its golf links from a concrete plain of wartime runways caused little comment; though the result was astonishing. These Goodwood alterations of a century ago were equally revolutionary, for they were carried out without the aid of bulldozers, tractors and other modern mechanical aids.

The Stewards' Cup ranks as one of the principal sprint handicaps of the season. First run in 1840 and won by *Epirus* (9 st. 7 lb.) from twenty-one challengers, it has produced many exciting finishes. Those who get impatient at delays should have been there in 1864, when the field of forty was thirty minutes late going to the start, to which was added a further delay of seventy minutes. A lesson in jockeyship was given in 1888 when *Bismarck* held a lead of several lengths. He looked certain to win, but his jockey looked round, the horse swerved, and lost to *Tib* by a head.

The first winner of the Goodwood Stakes in 1823 was *Dandijette*. In 1948 *Auralia* won in 4 minutes 13½ seconds. The Goodwood Cup was first run in 1812, over three miles. *Juvence* was the first French-bred horse to win, in 1853; *Starke*, in 1861, was the first American-bred. One of the finest finishes was in 1929, when *Old Orkney* gained the verdict over *Brown Jack*. The following year *Brown Jack* made amends. In 1937 *Fearless Fox* won in 4 minutes, 42 seconds. The Chesterfield Cup may lack a little in popular appeal, but as a handicap it always attracts some of the finest middle-distance horses.



## AN EDWARDIAN INTERLUDE

THERE are moods of nostalgia even for that which one has loved only by hearsay. I have read so much about the days when hansom cabs announced their approach in the night by a silver tinkle, that I can sometimes nearly persuade myself that I have personal recollections of that period. The gold of the 'nineties was perhaps never more than gilt, but its brief life was full of glitter. There was complete assurance and a leisured air about the way the Edwardian beauties enjoyed the Season in London, driving sedately round Hyde Park in regal victorias and barouches with coachmen bewigged and powdered footmen.

Had I lived in those days, my choice would not have been a carriage-and-pair. For preference it would have been a private hansom, not painted funereal black . . . that would have been like a public hansom . . . but with bright yellow wheels, scarlet shafts, and a scarlet cabin. The experience is mine already . . . the high climb . . . the leather cabin with tiny windows at each side and yellow curtains to match the wheels . . . above my head would dangle a swaying lamp . . . and the feeling of finality when the scarlet aprons were closed. Unfortunately, my dress would have to be in keeping. A top hat with curving brims, a narrow band, and flat edge over my eyes, would be worn at a rakish angle; maybe an eyeglass in my right eye; certainly an excessively waisted short coat with a low opening in the front; a flower would repose in the buttonhole; the shirt front would be wide with collar loose and slightly starched, whilst the heavily-knotted tie would have wide dangling ends. There would need to be long moustaches. The ends would trail down almost to the shoulders. The hair would have to be curled and frizzled with hot tongs and then stiffened with bear's grease. The traditional trousers would be pale strawberry roan with ends turned down and boots fashionably pointed.

There is no doubt that when it comes to detail, Victorian photographs are much more interesting than the paintings of that period, because then the cameras did not lie, so we know what

people really did look like. I have not the same confidence in contemporary photographs. The art of touching-up has reached such a pitch that the camera does lie. Personally, I do not think we look nearly as interesting today. Whenever I gaze at those fading yellow paper prisoners about whom I wonder, occasionally recall, and then quickly dismiss, it occurs whether in like fashion we shall gaze out, likewise prisoners and tongue-tied, to rouse in later generations a momentary, casual speculation, a fleeting memory. I feel we shall cut poor figures alongside most of our ancestors.

To turn back to the carriage-and-pair period of the Season, the late Victorians and Edwardians fascinate me. There is a *je ne sais quoi* about them, a hidden depth; they might have unusual experiences, do strange things, and say nothing. Those Edwardian beauties lived up to their reputations in dresses with bodices fitted so closely that they might have been poured into them, while their skirts rustled over countless be-ribboned and lace-flounced petticoats. The dresses were elegant, and feminine charm was cluttered with a flurry of parasols, feather boas and hanging vanity bags. They were proud, reserved, and self-contained, but all was not perfect. The Edwardian age may have been one of restless luxury. It was also vulgar to a degree. The long years of the mournful widowhood of Queen Victoria had given place to the social life of dinner parties and balls, the theatre and gambling, countryhouse visits and the races. Money rather than social rank was the key to recognition. Life lacked simplicity and style. Edwardian intricacies were expensive but pointless with only the hard glitter of their electric lights. There was abundance of leisure. It was not necessary to go into business, but it never seemed to occur to them that intelligence had any value.

Even a Season must have had many moments of monotony for a young man of leisure. Immaculately dressed, he would ride or walk in Rotten Row for about an hour, then change into frock-coat and tall hat for lunch at the club. The ladies might drive sedately in the park or stroll in fashionable Eaton Square. In the afternoon there were often concerts, perhaps by Lady Radnor and her band, or Lady Downe singing, or Alec Yorke giving recitations. He might be fortunate and be invited to a Saturday afternoon party at Holland House or Syon, but on Sunday morning in London he would observe the ritual of the traditional parade

in Hyde Park after lunch. Luncheon on Sundays would be memorable if he received an invitation from Lady Dorothy Nevill or Lady Jeune. He would then be certain to find himself in the company of statesmen and men of letters. He might even go to one of the musical receptions given by Mrs. Ronalds with the assistance of Sir Arthur Sullivan; or opera at Covent Garden on a de Reszke night; perhaps a theatre show with Connie Gilchrist or Arthur Roberts as the attraction; a ball at Marlborough House or Dudley House; or a reception at Grosvenor House.

Throughout the spate of engagements, an immaculate standard of dress would have to be maintained. There would be the reputation to uphold that in London could be found the smartest-dressed men in Europe, whose styles were copied by all the smartest foreigners. Wherever you went it would be noticeable. The well-dressed equestrians in Rotten Row rode for pleasure, not exercise. There was pride of appearance in the turn-out of the carriages, in the colourful liveries of the servants, in Bond Street where a silk hat and frock-coat were *de rigueur*. Soft shirts and collars had not been introduced, whilst the Homburg hat had just been worn by the Prince of Wales in the country, where men were expected to change before tea into brightly hued silk or velvet smoking suits.

Had we stayed in one of the best Edwardian houses . . . and, of course, all Edwardian houses were the best . . . there would be innumerable routine observances. We would take away a collection of vignettes . . . the commotion on Sunday mornings as to who should ride to church in the landau, who in the wagonette, who in the victoria, who in the brougham, who should walk, and so on. Mental pictures of brass bedsteads . . . artificial flowers . . . shell-pink silk reading lamps . . . Vichy water . . . brass trays for early morning tea . . . Régie cigarettes . . . family prayers . . . tweed caps and spats . . . horses champing bits . . . the bric-à-brac is endless.

The golden coins are melted down, youth has lost its gilt, the golden tresses are shorn, the spirit-lamps are out, yet fragrance demoded as frangipani still hangs about those old days . . . the days of the Edwardian Season.

## OUT OF SEASON

AUGUST

AUGUST is the month when exhausted Londoners are supposed to be recuperating amid the quietness of moor, fell and sea. London by tradition is "empty". Every night for ten weeks the pattern has remained the same . . . a whirl of receptions, theatres and dances. The non-stop party has now broken up. Evacuation to remote corners of the British Isles, the Continent, and across the Atlantic has left London a trifle melancholy. To those left behind it has a resemblance of a well-used room after a hectic evening. Litter in morning light is as cheerless and depressing as grey ash in a cold grate. London has entered the unfashionable weeks. The survivors feel inclined to take refuge in self-pity. They confide in letter and over the telephone that there is simply nothing to do. They band themselves together in a fellowship of misery . . . a coterie of susceptible individuals brooding in the self-created atmosphere of an internment camp.

There may be substance to the complaints. Some people are only made happy by artificial expressions of animation that can be produced any hour of day or night. Goodwood may be over. The sleeping-cars from Kings Cross may be occupied by the owners of guns, golf clubs and fishing-rods. But to say that London is "empty" is lugubrious nonsense. It is true that when the London Season ends a rare touch of colour dies. It is a flower of brief but brilliant duration. But London in August has likewise a contribution to make which can be appreciated by the discerning. The tempo is slower. There is time to appreciate the art of conversation. During the Season the effusiveness with which a familiar face is greeted evaporates a few minutes later when someone else is espied in the crowd. Unremitting acquaintance-ship never has time to develop into friendship. June and July maintain a fusillade of idle gossip. Such contacts titillate. They are not enduring. Now for the space of six weeks we will be able to discriminate between the dull and the brilliant, to classify and

avoid the bores and poseurs. There is a vintage richness about settling down to a long evening with a friend of old standing. There is no need to rush away shortly after nine o'clock to collect an odd partner for a party given by somebody you only vaguely know. Instead time is on our side. We dine at leisure. While we entrench these friendships and enjoy what life has to offer with



full knowledge of what we are doing, the evenings will lengthen, the leaves will assume autumnal colouring, and October will revive the urge for fresh faces and the old whirl of sound and music.

But in the meantime, tastes vary. Many desert our sunless clime and go abroad in search of blue skies and warmth. For them the boat train, passports, and foreign exchange. The prospect is tempting. Even for seasoned travellers the novelty-value remains fresh. We notice how much louder and faster the foreigner talks. In comparison we mumble, possibly due to smog in our throats.

Paris we may find as drab and damp as London, but there is Italy or Spain, Marseilles or Bordeaux, Mediterranean or Atlantic, a medley of potential experiences that must surely mean palms, oranges, pines, eucalyptus, juniper, lemons and myrtle, with intoxicating place-names like Catalan, Alps, Basque, Pyrenees, Sicilian, Tuscan, Portuguese and Venetian. Somewhere in that mass there is sun and warmth. Maybe we shall have to cross the hills to Corinth, or rest content with terra-cotta coloured Greece. We may see again Vesuvius smoking, and feel the midnight stillness of Pompeii. We may find thin air quivering with heat along the Ligurian coast with nothing but sea and shore, fishing boats and nets lying on the sands. Here bathing can be a celestial pleasure. Beyond, into the Ligurian sea, lies Corsica. Somewhere in the haze is Spezia, where we are told lie the marble mountains. The urge to go abroad is understandable. Everything seems translated. The mountains assume a grandeur and jaggedness unknown in Scotland and Wales. Where in our islands can you see terraces set with vines, olives, figs and chestnuts? Oxen draw loads of marble. Mules draw sand. Even the traffic horns echo more gaily than in Britain. Nets heavy with bianchetti are hauled in from the sea. Processions led by acolytes wend their way through the towns. Basques dance the fandango in the squares. Corpus Christi processions under scattered showers of rose petals. Sunshine and warmth, sunshine and warmth, and the scent of flowers in the air. These belong to abroad, that stimulating, invigorating Anglicized picnic.

It may be that simpler pleasures are sought, in which case there is no need to cross the Channel for the improbable continent, instead August gives us yet another opportunity . . . the opportunity to get to know London intimately. We are inclined to take our capital for granted. Too often are we ignorant of its background. It is not due to lack of affection. As Doctor Johnson said, when a man is tired of London, he is tired of life; for there is in London all that life can afford. That emotion is difficult to analyse. If I might quote Paul Cohen-Portheim, no one knows exactly what London is, where it begins or ends, or how many people inhabit it. It is a city, a county, a postal district or a police district, and as it is ever spreading, growing and changing its form, all these divisions do not embrace the whole. London in expansive mood eludes definition. In it, as Doctor Johnson

pointed out, a man may live in splendid society at one time, and in frugal retirement at another, without animadversion. Yet it is devoid of superficial charm. It lacks the air of Paris or Vienna. Even so its character is such that it does not pall. There is a plainness about it like unto certain comely virtues that constantly reveal fresh facets to its lovers. Whistler and Monet were alive to its qualities. But none can equal the unquestioned devotion shown by the Cockney for his home. The two are inseparable. Both puzzle the outsider. Hazlitt voiced his views on the Londoner when he said: "I do not agree with Mr. Blackwood in his definition of the word 'Cockney'. He means by it a man who has happened at any time to live in London and who is not a Tory: I mean by it a person who has never lived out of London and who has got all his ideas from it." The distinction was true. How many habitual Londoners really know London? London is so huge that one part of it takes a holiday in the other. Neither ever appreciates to the full what the other contains.

August is the month when the capital is flooded with a wave of visitors from the provinces and overseas. Every accent and intonation is heard. The Londoner cannot comprehend their mentality. It mystifies him that crowds should want to see Piccadilly Circus, Hyde Park Corner, Pall Mall, and Regent Street. The tourist and the Cockney are poles apart. The casual acceptance of the historic by the latter is matched by the naïve acceptance of the obvious by the former. This month London has a sprinkling of young American girls on their first visit to Europe. Thrilled by what they see, they have a nose for history and detail. The 616 steps leading to the ball that supports the huge cross over the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral is a fact to be noted. The Stone Gallery is equally fascinating. The view across London from the dome is breath-taking. The acres of blitzed desolation are gradually being healed by the hand of man and the touch of nature. The serpentine sprawl of intersecting streets. The Thames creeping up to Kew. The restless swarm of people far below. Here is a scene that daily greets bands of tourists. No one will ever know their thoughts as they gaze down on the capital. In their own way this is their "season".

There is talk about which theatres should be seen . . . where to eat . . . when Trafalgar Square comes into the itinerary . . . is Buckingham Palace open to the public . . . how can the police

outside the Houses of Parliament tell which is an M.P. . . . what do you have to do to be buried in Westminster Abbey . . . and so on. The questions and enthusiasm know no end. All is grist to the tourist mill. High in priority on the interest level comes the Tower of London. The visitor is impressed by the Beefeaters or Wardens of the Tower and by the fact that the uniform has remained unchanged since the reign of Edward VI. The chill air of the various towers . . . the poignant message interred in the words carved by prisoners in the stones and now protected by plate-glass covers . . . piteous testimony of the desire of man to live even though his existence be meaningless within the limited confines of these walls. The Martin Tower soaked in legend and haunting. The Bloody Tower. The Crown Jewels. Everything is here to impress the susceptible visitor.

But you are at liberty to ask how does all this affect us. Here we are left high and dry in a deserted London whilst our friends are either packing and struggling with time-tables or already sampling life in pleasanter surroundings. Are you suggesting that we should join a queue for a *char-à-banc* sightseeing tour with an impressionable crew aboard drawn from Lancashire, Ohio, Scotland, New York, Paris, Yorkshire, Salt Lake City and Oddlecomb-in-the-Marsh? Are you suggesting that we should climb 616 steps to the dome of St. Paul's in order to be impressed by the view or trudge round the haunted interior of the Tower? The inference is misleading. I mention them merely to emphasize the insatiable desire of tourists to get to grips with the vast stone octopus of London. They lap up facts and fiction with equal avidity. Their thirst for knowledge of detail is extraordinary. To Londoners such an attitude is incomprehensible and amusing. But this patronizing attitude is often false. The airy criticism postulates superior knowledge of all that is to be learnt. In point of fact the Londoner is often pathetically ignorant of its history and its treasures.

Ask a Londoner to name his London. It is possible that our intimates would murmur such places as Bond Street, Piccadilly, Burlington Arcade, Kensington Gardens, and so on. These are obvious choices, but they are only the cosmetics of London. The core of London lies to the east of Tower Bridge. The Thames has lost part of its significance since the Lord Mayor deemed fit to substitute a ceremonial game of charades for the symbolic river



procession by barge. It emphasized a fact of cardinal importance, namely, that here was the capital of a marine nation whose trading life involved the full paraphernalia of watermen, wherries, bargees, quays, and the natural element of water. This pattern remains in different guise. The Port of London adds meaning to the words uttered by Tacitus roughly nineteen hundred years ago when he referred to Londinium as a place which "although not honoured with the title of a Colony, was well known as a commercial centre thronged with merchants". How many Londoners can accurately describe the ramifications and activities of the Port of London Authority?

But such enquiries are for specialized tastes. It is possible to be of an enquiring mind in other ways. It is sometimes interesting to try to recapture aspects of London that have disappeared. To do so it is necessary to have an intimate knowledge of what has been. The London of Dickens is not very long ago. Many of the places remain as they were in his day, but without knowledge of the conditions of his hour they remain prosaic and dumb. The streets that knew those days are still there. The shades of the past still walk for those who have eyes to see. Soho is a typical example of the past and present commingling. Its stones have been paced by royalty and politicians, authors and artists. Soho reflects the cosmopolitan nature of the capital. It has been enshrined by the novelist's pen.

The intricacy of the streets of Soho drives away the memory of London in August. Dark eyes, the vivacious hands of the south, and the facial sallowness of Latin blood create an atmosphere in which macaroni and veal, ravioli and spaghetti, oily dishes and chickens are ever present. Here is a fragment of Italy mingled with the warmth of France set in a corner of London that accepts August as one more month in the year, neither fashionable nor unfashionable.

## THE GLORIOUS TWELFTH

THE days between Goodwood and the Twelfth are agreeably busy. We move in an atmosphere of fishing-rods and guns, shooting-sticks and golf clubs. Rumours about the grouse prospects are mixed. In the gunmaker's we hear whispers of heather-beetle, reductions of staff, shortage of keepers, increase of vermin, snowstorms in the spring, and so on. Certain areas are pin-pointed as patchy, others as fair to middlin'. The only consolation is that the game-book entry is not everything. The most important things in the bag are often incidental memories. The very act of handling our guns recalls the silence of the moors, a silence broken by the unceasing trill of trickling water, the hum of insects, the scent of heather honey on a Highland night, the mew of a buzzard, the challenge of an old cock grouse. The most graphic perhaps is the memory of the hush before a thunderstorm. The dead stillness in the air that perceptibly affects wild life. An arch of black mist, with ragged fringes trailing the moor, dragging onward with gathering speed, and beneath it a blank wall of coming rain. As the first big drops begin to spatter, a sudden gust of wind blows fiercely, a flash, a stunning detonation, a rumble as of mountains moving, a rending crash echoing from cloud to cloud with majestic rolls. Then, like a benediction, it departs. There are longer intervals between the lightning pulses. A rainbow crosses the trailing fringes of the storm. The glens send up a delightful reek of timely rain. A faint low peal murmurs in the distance. Wild life returns.

Such thoughts are inspired by our guns. The first drives of the new season soon make them reality. The head-keeper shakes hands with old friends. The gillie with the pony is there to take charge of the cartridges. The party consists of eight guns. On the skyline the beaters wait for the signal to march. Lots are drawn for the butts. The centre ones are usually preferred to those on the outside. A great deal depends upon whether the flight of the birds has been studied. Grouse have a natural flight, and if there is no wind they will invariably go the same way, and the butts

should be placed accordingly. Even if we are unlucky, it will only be for one drive. We move up two places for the second drive, and the same again for the third drive.

There is no talking and no excitement: all are veterans who know exactly what is expected of them. We settle ourselves on a shooting-seat with the barrels of the first gun resting on the edge of the butt. The peat smells familiar. The other butts on either side are about eighty yards apart on a straight line. We glance at the loader behind with his open bag of cartridges. A preliminary shuffle shows whether we can swing freely. Black specks can be seen in the distance, rapidly approaching. We speculate whether the birds will come to the right or the left of that rock. Plenty are sweeping over. An old cock swerves and comes down the line, so high that it is safe to fire at him. The man above us in the next butt misses with both barrels. We follow suit, thinking that he must be out of shot. But the man below us crumples him up, taking him well in the beak. Another bird comes whirring straight at our butt. It reaches the marking-stone, but still looks out of range. We wait a second. The trigger is pulled. Missed. The second barrel. The bird crumples up. Nothing can dim the thrill of the first of the season. A shrill whistle warns that the beaters are approaching. The drive is over. The pick-up begins.

We walk to the next line of butts, crossing a deep ravine, and trudge up the steep slope beyond. The highest butts are over 1,500 feet above sea level. No shooting between drives. The view is impressive, a vast expanse of undulating heather. It is hard to realize that a few hours earlier we were part of the confusion of Euston. We reach our butts and have a long wait, for this is another feeding drive. The sun is strong now, and a faint steam rises from the damp heather. Down the gully the view stretches for miles taking in tumbling backs, pools, and patches of rock. Warning whistles come from the butts on each side. The birds are coming fast now. A short right and left—then a miss—then—one—two—miss—four. High and fast down the line of guns. When the drive ends, warm gun-barrels are rested on the butt-edge. A glow of satisfaction anticipates with equanimity the stolid question . . . “Anything to pick up, sir?”

Lunch by a peat-stained burn. Cold grouse eaten with our fingers. Whisky and water out of horn cups. Coffee served with a *chasse* of sloe gin. Food rarely tastes so delicious.



It is interesting to compare the pleasures of the moment with those of the past. Sport with the gun has long been a favourite in these islands, yet how many men who shoot have heard of Colonel Peter Hawker. He is unread, but he was the first great writer and practitioner of the sport as we know it today. His book *Instructions to Young Sportsmen in all that Relates to Guns and Shooting* is described by Sir Ralph Payne Gallway as without an equal for terseness, accuracy and original observation. It is an acknowledged classic, but I find more entertaining the book by Colonel George Hanger, published in the same year, 1814, and entitled *To All Sportsmen, particularly to Farmers and Gamekeepers*. His detailed advice has a somewhat full military flavour; for instance he recommends that, in order to be sure of keeping poachers out of your wood you should mount a six-pounder cannon on top of your house, and fire a few rounds of glass marbles and perforated clay balls into the wood by night, two or three times a week. Somewhat old-fashioned advice; even so we are in direct succession with such figures, a claim equally applicable to Tom de Grey, the sixth Lord Walsingham, who performed a feat on 30th August, 1888, which will probably never be equalled. On his own 2,000-acre moor at Blubberhouses in Yorkshire he fired 1,500 cartridges and killed 1,070 grouse in fourteen hours eighteen minutes. There were twenty drives and he used a pair of light Purdy hammer guns, not ejectors, firing three and a quarter drams of black powder. Once during the day, when there were only three birds in sight, he killed all three with one shot. There are many other exceptional examples; among them must be placed the feat of Sir Everard Hambro, who, in Wigtownshire in the 'nineties, killed eighteen blackgame with one barrel. Skill and age go together in the case of Horatio Ross, who is alleged to have killed eighty-two grouse with eighty-two shots on his eighty-second birthday, and the late Lord Ripon who killed 420 grouse in one day at the age of seventy. Most remarkable of all is probably the bag of 2,929 grouse killed in one day on 12th August, 1915. It happened on Lord Sefton's Abbeystead and Littledale Moors in Lancashire. In three days, eight guns, joined by one more on the last day, bagged 5,971 grouse. The season's total was 17,078 grouse all shot on roughly 17,000 acres. The eight guns consisted of the Earl of Sefton, Major the Hon. J. Dawnay, the Hon. H. Stonor, Captain the Hon. T. Fitzherbert, the Hon. J. Ward, Mr.

de Oakley, Major the Hon. E. Beaumont, and the Hon. H. Bridgeman.

Yorkshire can claim to have introduced "grouse driving" when, roughly 150 years ago, Squire Spencer Stanhope found it was less tiring to sit in a sand-pit with a double-barrelled muzzle-loading gun and wait for his sons to drive the grouse over him. This driving principle was further developed by Squire Stanhope and the Bishop of Durham on a more organized scale on Horsley Moor, their lead being followed by Lord Savile, who erected some butts at Rishworth Moor.

Our pleasures are identical. Soon the air will smell of frost, of oak leaves, of wet soil under a southern wall. The nights are drawing in. Great splashes of yellow will appear in the crowns of the elms. We get the scent of crushed crab-apples from the path trodden under the fence. The last few birds will be left behind in the glen that rests for another season.

## COWES WEEK

THE Isle of Wight is England in miniature. Tennyson is its poet, Victoria its queen. The countryside is green and gentle, studded with charming old manor houses and converted farms. Lilliputian downs rise high above the Channel. Sunsets and the Needles attract the romantic. Enchantment is added by the sub-tropical Undercliff. Tradition is preserved by Cowes and the Royal Yacht Squadron, names that symbolize for the yachtsmen what Lord's means to the cricketer, St. Andrews to the golfer, and the Jockey Club to the Turf.

The R.Y.S. is the most distinguished of yachting clubs, the traditional rallying point for Cowes week, which resembles a second Season by the sea, yet few know the history of its beginnings. We are taken back to the year 1815, a period when Brook's and White's had a monopoly of the traditional club life in London. Beau Brummell and his Dandies had created such a situation by malicious blackballing at these two St. James's Street clubs that admittance for the ordinary member of society was virtually out of the question. A natural result was the founding of new societies, and the early years of the last century saw the inauguration of such clubs as the Guards', the Travellers', the United Service, and the Athenaeum. Conversations on similar lines took place on the Island after the procession of the pilot boats. The *Vine* and *Medina* at East Cowes formed the scene of these convivial gatherings. As a consequence a body of gentlemen met at the *Thatched House Tavern* in St. James's Street under the presidency of Lord Grantham on 1st June, 1815, and decided to form themselves into a club with membership limited to men interested in sailing yachts in salt water. The original members numbered forty-two. The constitution was extremely simple and modest. There was no question of a clubhouse, eating, drinking, or sleeping facilities. Subscription, a nominal two guineas. Two meetings a year, one in the spring at the *Thatched House*, the other over dinner at an East Cowes hotel. Intending members had to

own a yacht of specified tonnage, pay an entrance fee of three guineas, and have the necessary social standing.

From such a simple beginning evolved this famous club, as natural as the rhythmic plashing of an oar and the soft lapping of the water. To appreciate the events of the intervening years it is necessary to view them against a general background of the Squadron's achievements. The ones instanced are fragmentary, but each contributed to the growth and development of the club. At the outset the members hardly took themselves seriously. It was felt in 1817 that the two guineas subscription was unnecessary, and that the three guineas subscription from new members would provide adequate income. Shortly afterwards a letter was read at a special meeting at East Cowes. Dated from the *Royal George*, the Regent's yacht, lying off Brighton, it stated that the Prince Regent desired to be a member of the Yacht Club. Thus began the long tradition of royal patronage which the club has since enjoyed.

Membership increased. In 1823 the total was seventy-one with a further addition of 132 honorary members. In 1824 we learn that the members owned 5,000 tons of shipping, and employed 500 local seamen in their navigation. Comments on the recognized uniform are pertinent: "a common blue jacket with white trousers, and to such as are not too square in the stern it is far from being an unbecoming dress. There were, however, some strange figures of gentlemen sailors at the Cowes Regatta, and they ought to have their pictures taken." The members were progressive. They approached the Duke of Wellington, and after lengthy negotiations obtained the right of entry into French ports for members' vessels, a privilege later granted by many other countries such as the Netherlands in 1827, Spain and Russia in 1829.

The transition from ordinary summer yachting at Cowes to the beginning of modern yacht-racing dates from 1826, the year when the Royal Yacht Club initiated the first of the Cup races at Cowes by donating a Gold Cup of a hundred guineas for vessels belonging to members. It is not without interest to note the cost of yachting in those days. A contributor to the *Sporting Magazine* remarks that the *Miranda* and the *Menai* in 1826 "left little change out of £8,000 each". These yachts probably averaged 150 tons each. The same journal in 1832 states that "a vessel of 100 tons



seldom stands the owner in less than £5,000 to £6,000, varying, of course, from that to £1,000, according to the ornamental parts, internal fittings, and other contingencies". The full-rigged *Falcon*, of 350 tons, cost £25,000. The cost of upkeep and maintenance fluctuated. The annual expense of the *Miranda*, a typical racing cutter of large tonnage, was £1,200. Against that the *Sporting Magazine* of September 1826 assures us that "the expense of a vessel of 30 tons does not exceed a guinea a day", a remark referring to the cutter *Altisidora*.

An important feature of the Cowes Regatta centres on the series of Kings' and Queens' Cups which provide the chief contests. These date from 1827 when George IV presented a cup to be sailed for by members of the Royal Yacht Club, the trophy being "a model of a good old-fashioned tankard, having the royal arms in front, surrounded by an oak wreath, and inside the cover a bust of the King". By 1830 the Royal Yacht Club had become an established institution. From its modest birth at the Medina Hotel in East Cowes it had become a flourishing club with a house of its own and a staff of officials. The Admiralty had issued a warrant empowering members to wear the White Ensign of the Royal Navy. July 1833 saw the King acknowledge the national utility of the Royal Yacht Club by expressing the wish that henceforth it should be known and styled *The Royal Yacht Squadron* "of which His Majesty is graciously pleased to consider himself the head".

It is about this time that signs appear of the blackballings and other signs of exclusiveness which at times have been charged against the Squadron as a club. A contemporary critic wrote: "If the present system of blackballing the most unexceptional candidates for mere party purposes is continued, it will not be difficult to foresee that the club must ere long be dissolved and remodelled. There were only two cases of blackballing in the old days: one of a Duke—Buckingham—who did not renew his subscription, and was rejected on seeking re-election; the other the owner of a yacht like a river barge with a flat bottom, and he was excluded more in joke than otherwise, it being reported that she was two months in her voyage from the Thames to Cowes, and that moreover the bulkhead and chimney in the cabin were of brick. But this was not done for party purposes." The prophecies were unduly pessimistic, for the records show nothing

but steady progress. The social side of the Cowes festivals became more marked. There were numerous balls, dinners and entertainments, many attended by the Duchess of Kent and the Princess Victoria. An auxiliary room had to be used, where "the Cowes people stared open-mouthed at the quality dancing in the lamp-light until they pushed each other off the parade into the sea".

By 1857 the little fishing village of Cowes had grown into an important watering-place of 6,000 inhabitants, where municipal improvements, lines of packets and electric telegraphs to the mainland were topics of the day. The local newspaper kept its eye on the hotel proprietors, pointing out that 30s. a week for a small and ill-furnished room, "with what is vauntingly termed a sea view", was an excessive charge which tended to keep visitors away.

In 1858, the Squadron was removed to the Castle. The interest taken by the Prince of Wales in the affairs of the Squadron added considerably to the influence of the club as a social institution and as a society of yachtsmen. From 1870 onwards people of leisure flocked into the little town as soon as Goodwood was over. For a fortnight the narrow streets became congested. True, an improved steamboat service made Cowes more accessible, but it still retained its former character. Bathing machines were rarities, nigger minstrels unknown, the Parade had yet to be. The High Street was so narrow that, when two carriages met, the wheels of one mounted the pavement and shop doorways offered the only escape. It was in such surroundings that social England, taking the lead from the Prince of Wales, transformed Regatta Week into a fashionable gathering, a breath of fresh air after the full programme of the London Season. Cowes was even more a social focal point when the Prince became Commodore of the Squadron in 1882.

It is difficult today to visualize this past. Looking across a lustreless expanse of white-topped waters, reflecting the play of light and shadow, turning to a glittering plain of emerald and opal, there they lie, as sleek and chic, as femininely capricious as only yachts can look, shiny, elegant, a forest of immensely tall masts. Men change. Ships change. It is fascinating to recall how the types of the Squadron vessels have changed in fifty-odd years. The middle 'nineties saw half of the vessels officially included in the R.Y.S. fleet as wooden sailing-vessels. They were stoutly



Cowes Week—a second Season by the Sea



constructed, ex-racers, built to Lloyd's highest class. There was one drawback, lack of personal comforts. The bath was frequently under the floor of the cabin, where all had to bathe in turn. Ladies were forbidden to use even sea-water soap in these cold sea-water dips, a ruling that every lady ignored. As a result the soap lined the bilges with a greasy slime, and the smells of old yachts became notoriously strong.

It was all part of the scene. There are moods of nostalgia even for that which one has known only by hearsay. Elegance hangs about these old days and the leaves in which they are recorded. The gold of the 'nineties was perhaps never more than gilt, but its brief life was full of glitter. Today the Royal Yacht Squadron dominates Cowes with mature dignity, nothing can shake such an aristocratic institution, a fitting companion for the Season.

## DUBLIN HORSE SHOW

THOSE who regard the International Horse Show as one of the highlights of the Season's attractions may well look to the Dublin Horse Show for a continuance of that pleasure. All roads seem to lead to Ballsbridge, certainly all the Irish counties are represented—the cream of Irish horses, men and women. The air is friendly. The women have caught up at last with fashion. Banks of flowers. Somewhere in the distance a band is playing. Brood mares with shy velvety foals, the Bloodstock Paddock where the sales are held each day. More than a thousand horses pass through the sale-ring during the week. Yearlings are led round the auction-ring between walls carefully padded with thick straw in case one of these nervous, spirited things should take fright and be hurt. The people here are not spectators, but deeply and closely concerned, lean young men who swear by *Ruff's Guide to the Turf*. In another corner the Young Entry are showing their ponies, intent and absorbed. There are classes for harness horses and the parade of inter-Hunt teams. Ballsbridge shows more than anything that the common Irish denominator that ignores class and frontiers is the horse . . . stronger than politics, bitterness, economic wars. Buyers come from all over the world to this paradise of horse lovers. Few breeding grounds can equal the fields of Meath and Kildare, where the limestone soil makes such bone for young horses as for children, and the grass is wonderful. There is nothing like Horse Show week—by day or night. Everyone becomes bewitched. In fact, one need not be at all horsey to linger happily here, and there is much to occupy the mind when the Show Grounds are left.

A stay in Dublin is as good as a tonic particularly when you think of the oddities, quirks, charms and eccentricities that constitute life by the Liffey. Ireland, elusive as a leprechaun, reflects the mood of the moment with the ease of a chameleon. Through the eyes of a stranger, an Irishman is a bundle of lovable contradictions—one foot in the past, the other in the present, head in the clouds—Don Quixote against an eighteenth-century

background. The facets of his personality are limitless. Sadness and gaiety, religiosity and profanity, exaggeration and understatement, hatred and affection, a brew of effervescent potentialities that bubbles and seethes without warning. Each reflects an integral part of the Irish character. The fragment is complete in itself, but these isolated flashes of Irish life do not dovetail. The keypiece eludes the discerning eye of the visitor. The saga of Ireland is unfinished.

Wrongs die hard in Ireland. Political wrongs never die. It was H. V. Nevinson who observed that after discussing England with Irish friends he always felt as if he had been exquisitely operated on for a disease he never had. He became infected by their hatred for the English. There is nothing personal about that hatred. Only on rare occasions does it find full expression, and then the emotion is usually stimulated by Irish whisky and native love of an argument. Politically Ireland is immature. From an English point of view her leaders have yet to achieve a sense of historical perspective. The past is never allowed to fade. The incidents of the Cromwell campaign are used as contemporary evidence. In that sense England and Ireland will for ever be incompatible. Irritating though this tendency is at times, it does not prevent an Englishman from holding in respect those whose motives, at times open to question, were initially prompted by the sense of nationality. The story of the Irish Revolution reads like a legend. I remember listening in the Dail to the final pronouncement of the divorce between England and Eire. To paraphrase Anatole France, we saw Mr. Costello become a moment in history. And yet, it was more than that. It was the culmination of history. The Prime Minister of Eire was to introduce the Bill to repeal the External Relations Act. As often happens, the occasion was void of incident or colour. Only ten seconds were needed for leave to be given to Mr. Costello to introduce the Republic of Ireland Bill.

It was granted without dissent or applause. There were no flashes of Irish pugnacity, humour or wit. It was an anti-climax of sober solemnity. How different to the flamboyancy of the 1922 discussions when the Sinn Fein leaders took a house in Kensington. The Free State was born in an atmosphere of drama and comedy. The contrast might be shown by a single incident. Lloyd-George, Winston Churchill, Austen Chamberlain, Arthur

Griffith, Birkenhead, Michael Collins, and the rest sought a solution hour after hour. It is said that one night Collins and Birkenhead went to dinner whilst the others continued the talks. It was no use. The deadlock was complete. Then came a telephone message that the other two were on their way, having discovered a completely satisfactory formula. Lloyd-George was elated, and went into the hall to greet the saviours of the situation. "And now for your formula," he said. Birkenhead concentrated for a minute, and then looked puzzled. "You tell him, Collins," he said. Collins scratched his head. "God forgive me," he said, "I've forgotten it, too." I tried to imagine how Michael Collins would have reacted to the level unemotional way in which this historic Bill was introduced. Only the postscript would have appealed for the Bill appeared tantamount to a policy of divorce without separation.

Apart from the political scene, life in Dublin presents many other contrasts. Beggars are numerous and importunate. Grafton Street is still a cousin of Bond Street, although the women do not look as smart as in pre-war days. Street names are written in Gaelic for the benefit of a people who are striving hard to be Irish, but who are not interested in their native tongue. Here and there an air of faded Georgian opulence lingers, the illusion being helped by red-brick and iron balconies. At heart the genuine Dubliner is bohemian. Personal appearance and worldly goods are ranked lower in the scale of values than ready wit and a lively tongue. Satire is an Irish talent. Join a party of Irishmen and before the evening is over every subject discussed will have been approached from opposing points of view. Arguments can become outrageous. Epigrammatic gems reminiscent of Sheridan and Oscar Wilde will flash in extravagant fashion. In a country of prejudices and parochial outlook, the Irishman has made this exception. He has condoned and encouraged unbridled intercourse with the world on the cultural plane. This policy, which has persisted since the seventeenth century, has produced a gamut of outstanding names . . . Sheridan, Burke, Thomas Amory, Swift, Oscar Wilde, Goldsmith, Henry Brooks, George Bernard Shaw, George Moore, T. E. Lawrence, W. B. Yeats, James Joyce, James Stephens, Lord Dunsany, and, not least, the Abbey Theatre.

The cumulative effect of this influence has been far-reaching.



It reflects something of the innate complexities of the Irish people. The genius identified with each name is rare, for Nature only distils a minute drop of progressive wisdom, but the effect persists in ever-widening circles. Wisdom did not perish with the destruction of the library at Alexandria. Hellenism did not cease when Athens fell. In like fashion, culture did not end in Ireland when James Joyce laid down his pen. Each succeeding generation endeavours to wear the inherited vestments of culture like a heavy dalmatic. Today in Dublin groups of embryonic giants have gathered under the shadow of Irish genius. They are pale abstractions of what they seek to mirror, but the urge is real. Much of their philosophy is unintelligible to an Englishman. He becomes lost in the vague lyricism and Celtic twilight. The note of melancholy and highly latinized English of Joyce is confusing, although in essence it is a true reflection of one aspect of the Irish nature. Joyce had no respect for the English tongue, yet he brought to life the idle chatter of washerwomen by the Liffey and the atmosphere of Dublin squares and beery streets with the same gusto as veiled obscenities and euphuistic word-play. The non-analytical mind of an Englishman will probably find the influence of W. B. Yeats easier to appreciate. It is purely aesthetic. Yet even Yeats reflected the Irish trait of always willing to follow a mood. The tradition of such men lingers behind the Georgian façade of an indolent capital for those who would be disciples.

It has been said that there are two clocks in Dublin. One tells the time by the passing of minutes. The other is an introspective mirage of the centuries. A few miles away in the Wicklow Mountains the clock is put back in different fashion. Here is a glimpse of the heart of Ireland. Against a background of peat-bogs, the smell of turf fires, and folk-lore of the cluricaun and the pooka, there are Irishmen who are content to look back instead of forward. The earth remembers her past, and the recollection is happy. It is a characteristic that an Englishman finds difficult to understand. The nearest he can get to comprehension is something in a minor key that is never quite heard . . . like the heavy rustle of whispered prayer seeping through the transepts . . . the noise of leaves in a summer evening.

We may decide to leave the self-conscious sophistication of Dublin that always threatens to become rustic and see something of the Green Isle. No holiday could be better spent. Once seen, it

will be impossible to forget the vision of the shimmering lakes and lush valley of Killarney, the mountain of Mangerton, the peaks of Macgillicuddy's Reeks. An air of loneliness permeates these acres of loveliness. The soul of Ireland rests beneath cedars of Lebanon. Nor can memory forget the village of Blarney commemorated by a Stone and a kiss. The glens of Antrim. The Plain of Tipperary. Cloud patterns in the waters of Lough Neagh, largest lake in these Islands. The white roads and poverty-stricken shacks of Connemara—rock-strewn fields, barer even than the strips of thin soil near Land's End, grey walls, gloomy bog pools, turf fires. The Mourne Mountains dominated in gentle fashion by Slieve Donard. The salt expanse of Strangford Lough. The mountains of Co. Waterford. Mount Melleray with its Trappist monastery, where monks observe a vow of silence to the grave. Fields of flax in bloom. The lifeless penury of Kerry villages. The warm-blooded commentary on peasant life at the Puck Fair of Killorglin. The industrial progressiveness of Belfast. Isolated fiords. The ecclesiastical calm of Armagh. It is a piecemeal pattern of violent contrasts. In places the twilight of poverty touches ways of life that have persisted without change through centuries of hardship. The spasmodic brilliance of contemporary luxury makes an uneasy companion alongside derelict slums and mist-bound crofts. Here are characters beloved by the dramatist Synge—an economic tangle worthy of Chekhov.

All this and more waits for us when the Horse Show is over for another year. It is always the same . . . nothing changes. Dublin remains a dignified capital with mud on its boots . . . an oasis of introspective egocentric isolationism. Regrets at leaving the Green Isle are not confined to people. Many a horse, bred in the Golden Vale of Tipperary, will pine in an English stable for the green of Irish fields and the banks and stone walls he knew.

## SPORT ON THE FELLS

THERE is a tendency to imagine that good sport can only be had on the "big" occasions. Such an attitude is regrettable. It means the loss of many of the most enjoyable hours that sporting activities can yield. Names like Newmarket, Epsom, Lord's, Ascot, and Henley contain a magic capable of attracting enthusiasts in their thousands during the Season. But the lesser events have traditions just as strong and supporters just as keen. For example, the Lake District is not popularly considered a sporting centre. The name conjures up visions of grey cloud, grey stone, mountains, and lakes like polished steel. Everything is still on the fells. Curling wreaths of smoke from farm and cottage chimneys alone indicate life in the valleys. Yet Cumberland and Westmorland have a proud tradition for annual sports meetings—unique in character—the most famous being the Grasmere Sports which attract an overspill of visitors after the Season has ended.

Without much alteration it has remained unchanged for almost a century. Many events are just as they were when watched by Hartley Coleridge and Wordsworth. The wrestling bouts exercise a fascination for the uninitiated. There is a peculiar attraction about two eighteen-stone men grappling each other like human bears—silently shuffling into position. The moment of tension before the throw—flurry of legs—a massive body is swept clear of the ground—swung round in mid-air—the end has come. Brute strength appears to count more than skill, but there is much more to it than that. Talk to a Cumbrian. The conversation is sprinkled with technical terms like "hank", "click", "cross-buttock", "back-heel", and "swinging-hipe".

The Fell Race ranks as one of the severest tests in athletic events. The scene can be visualized. A dozen competitors, experienced mountaineers, line up. In a few minutes they will be off. The man in red jersey and white shorts is favourite. Many fancy a slip of a lad who hardly looks strong enough to finish the

course. They are faced with a climb of 2,000 feet, and the return run to see who can get back in the fastest time.

The line is balanced for the signal. Then—"They're away!" Nothing sensational at first. The climbers, shrinking in size, pick their way, gradually converging into a thin line as the trail narrows near the top. Each man is given a ticket to prove that he gained the summit. Now for the difficult part—coming down decides the issue.

Leaps and bounds of almost twenty feet. Several fall and are out of the race. "Red Jersey" and "Black Jersey" are well to the fore. They are almost clear of the difficult ground. "Red Jersey" is out in front . . . "He's winning!" "He's won!" He flings himself on the grass. A few seconds later and "Black Jersey" is lying gasping for breath beside him. Supporters surge round. Everyone talks at once. The walk to the ring—a silver cup—£15—cheers of applause—another Fell Race has become history for farm, cottage, and bar parlour.

A great deal of excitement surrounds the pole jump. Here rustic athletics can be seen at its best. Before the war it was customary to find the late Earl of Lonsdale, whose name was linked for so long with this meeting, stepping into the ring to follow the event more closely. In one sense it is not spectacular. Anyone who clears 11 feet can almost regard the cup as good as won. The record was set up as long ago as 1887 when Tom Ray of Ulverston topped the bar at 11 feet 6 inches. But what competitors lack in skill is made up with enthusiasm. It is interesting to watch the "climbing" in the pole vault—a practice forbidden elsewhere in this type of event.

The principal attraction for many onlookers is the Hound Trail. An aniseed trail is dragged for miles and hounds are not slow to give tongue and sniff the air. In the valley the calm is rent with last-minute bawls and shouts from bookmakers who have done a roaring business among the locals. "Forager" is apparently the favourite, but, unless something is known about these thirty frantic hounds, betting is merely a matter of guess-work.

The signal has gone; every leash is slipped; in a twinkling every hound is away.

The course is not too good from the spectator's viewpoint. But every now and then a thin ribbon of white can be seen

weaving a sinuous line among the hills. The minutes seem like hours. The usual speed is 10 miles in 35 minutes.

Suddenly a faint cry can be heard in the distance. The trail has almost finished. Everyone cranes their necks. Field-glasses are focussed on the opening. Two hounds come bounding along. The locals name them with miraculous ease—"Forager" and "Avenger". They take the last wall with effortless ease. The favourite stumbles. "Avenger" wins. Both dogs locate their masters and without further ado are rewarded with a bowl of meat.

Such are some of the attractions of the Grasmere Sports. It has an appeal of its own. The surroundings alone make it memorable. In the 'seventies it was looked upon as something of a novelty. Everything was primitive in organization and prizes. Gradually it developed into something of a fashion parade; declined a little about the time of the First World War; but re-established its popularity in the 'thirties with a cosmopolitan following. Today it is frequented by all types of spectator: Americans looking for local colour, business-men from Lancashire, workers from cotton mills on a town holiday, girls in khaki shorts and studded shoes, farmers from the fells, cyclists, labourers, children, tradesfolk, a yearly quota of people fresh from the excitement of the London Season, and officials who rush all over the place with rosettes of office, thoroughly enjoying their hour of authority—and rightly so, for this is the spirit of Lakeland at play. What takes place will be described in after months in Liverpool, Manchester, London, Ireland, maybe isolated towns in the Middle West, or New York suburbs, to say nothing of the arguments in Cumbrian and Westmorland villages and hamlets.

Although it does not come within the scope of the Grasmere Sports, no survey of Lakeland Sports would be complete without reference to the sheepdog trials. These are more local in attraction as reflected in the crowds that attend. They are mainly "natives", dialects are rich, comments shrewd.

A smooth, swelling hill forms a natural grandstand, the valley an amphitheatre. The trials themselves are classic examples of disciplined co-ordination of effort between shepherd and dog. An intricate and unpredictable business. So much depends upon the reactions of three apprehensive sheep. They are driven towards the centre of the field where a collie and his master are waiting.

The shepherd remains motionless. The collie, with eye and ear fixed on his master, circles round the sheep. The objective—an open gateway. The sheep have other ideas. They become restless and threaten to break away.

The dog crouches, then sidles stealthily towards them in response to his master's whistle. The first obstacle negotiated, there follow devious tests, until finally only the penning is left. The sheep huddled together are coaxed to the entrance, where invariably they take fright and look like scattering. An active combination between shepherd and dog frequently produces an encircling movement, when, if things go according to expectation—and how rarely they do—the sheep get bored with the whole affair and trot meekly into the pen.

A successful trial is like an exhibition of hypnotism, so perfect is the link between shepherd and dog, so uncanny is the collie's anticipation. To a layman such perfection in training is almost incredible, yet it is part of a shepherd's everyday life. That is the essential difference between Lakeland sport and the type associated with the magic names of the London Season. The background and purpose of the latter is so often artificial. The former is spontaneous and natural.

## IN SEARCH OF CULTURE

AT ONE time it was said that the people of Edinburgh were too reticent and had lived too long in the east wind to take kindly to strangers or to share in that spirit of festival which it is admittedly easier to acquire in southern climes. Such a thought is now libellous. Experience garnered over a period of years has turned the International Festival of Music and Drama into a cherished institution, whilst it would be difficult to find more hospitable hosts. The setting is perfect. Romance and history go hand-in-hand in Edinburgh, for Nature has dowered her with beauty and character. The flood-lit Castle has become an unforgettable symbol of faerie aspect as it glows against the background of night.

At times the question is asked: What is the idea behind the Edinburgh Festival? A pertinent answer would be to point out that whilst Salzburg is devoted to Mozart and Bayreuth to Wagner, Edinburgh is an international arena for national styles in the Arts. Shakespeare is shown in the great English tradition, Molière is shown in the French tradition played by a French company, Italian music is played as Italian composers intended, the same treatment is given to works by German composers. The Festival aim is simple: to present the Arts in the distinctive styles of their countries of origin. The standard of performance is measured by an international yardstick . . . a standard that has facilitated the growth in stature of the Festival as an artistic event of world importance. Few things could be more delightful than this postscript of richness to the whirl of the Season.

Edinburgh is a city of many moods. Nowhere am I more conscious of these contrasts than when I stand in Princes Street and look across the gardens to the serried line of pinnacles, towers, spires, turrets and the Castle. Behind that ridge lies much of the history of Scotland. The Royal Mile is Scotland in miniature. Canongate is a feast of medieval architecture with its dark wynds, gloomy closes, stone courtyards and towering tenements out of which swarm children and women shouldering

baskets of clothes on their way to the public wash-houses. With the exception of Naples, I know of no country in Europe where the Royal Palace is surrounded by such humble dwellings.

There is so much to see and learn that it is difficult to know where to begin. Ghosts of the past beckon from every side. Here a Queen walked . . . there a Reformer thundered . . . that was where the Young Pretender passed . . . here was where Mary, Queen of Scots spent her last night in Edinburgh . . . under that roof lived Robert Burns . . . in that cellar were signed the Articles of Union between England and Scotland . . . Sir Walter Scott dined there . . . Montrose was led past here on his way to execution . . . Oliver Cromwell lived in that house . . . this was "my lord Seton's lodging" . . . yonder was buried Adam Smith . . . that building over there is the quaintest dwelling in Edinburgh . . . on that site stood the Sanctuary Cross. The claims are endless and they are true. Rightly did Chalmers say: "As the main avenue from the Palace to the city, it has borne upon its pavement the burden of all that was beautiful, all that was gallant, all that has become historically interesting in Scotland for the last six or seven hundred years." In spite of its drabness, the Royal Mile is still regal . . . the artery between Castle and Palace.

I stood in an open quadrangle before the gateway to Holyrood-house. The building itself is disappointing. There is no comparison with the Doge's Palace or Windsor Castle. The kilted sentry guarded little else but the memories of the past, but those memories are as romantic as anything else across the Border. I found it difficult to realize that one of the saddest of Royal figures, the lovely Princess Magdalene of France, had once sheltered behind that mass of grey stone. Forty days after her marriage to James V, she passed away, a mere child of seventeen, a victim of consumption, and for the first time general mourning was observed throughout the country. In one of those shuttered rooms Mary, Queen of Scots tried in vain to reason with the tempestuous John Knox. No ironic twist of fate could have produced such diametrically-opposed antagonists. Reconciliation was out of the question. The cleric who thundered against the "vices of the Court, the immoderate dancing, and the vast whoredom, that thereof ensued", had nothing in common with this warm-blooded woman. The shadow of tragedy was ever present. It lingers still in uneasy echoes in her rooms at Holyrood,

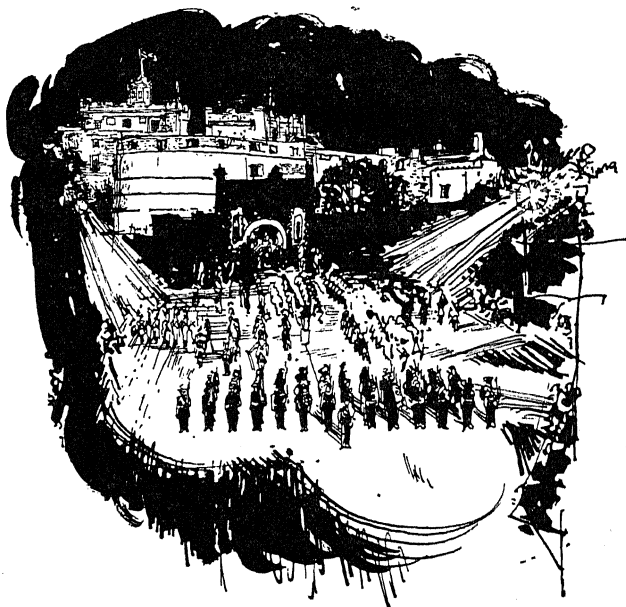


the tiny chamber where Rizzio supped with the Queen before he was murdered. It is fascinating to reconstruct that crime and re-create the life of this Scottish Queen, who sailed through thick mist into Leith to claim the throne, and six years later left her capital for the last time under the shelter of night.

Here it was on the eve of Christmas more than three hundred and fifty years ago that the people of Edinburgh forgathered to hear the proclamation at the christening of James's younger son: "Lord Charles of Scotland, Duke of Albany, Marquis of Ormond, Earl of Ross and Lord Ardmannoch", proud titles that gave no indication that one day the infant would die on the gallows in Whitehall. Many would like to have been present over a century later when Charles Edward Stuart, at the head of some eighty horsemen, gazed upon this bleak palace for the first time—a Stuart at Holyrood; or witnessed the spectacular preparations that marked the arrival of George IV, the first visit of an Hanoverian monarch to Scotland. Before leaving we should glance at the most disappointing picture gallery in Europe—the portraits of one hundred and ten Scottish monarchs. This collection was painted by a Dutchman named James de Witt, as laid down by a contract he signed on 26th February, 1684. The terms of the agreement are extraordinary. He promised to paint all the Scottish kings, legendary and historical, "from King Fergus the First to King Charles the Second, our gracious Sovereigne", the whole lot to be completed within two years, at a remuneration of £120 per annum, or roughly forty shillings per king. The results speak for themselves.

Edinburgh Castle is another immense accumulation of national history. It has been besieged on more occasions than any other castle in Europe. I remember it by four features. The miniature Norman chapel, seventeen feet by eleven feet, which stands as the memorial to the Queen who ordered it to be built almost nine centuries ago . . . the small room where Mary, Queen of Scots gave birth to the infant who became James I of England and VI of Scotland . . . the Scottish War Memorial which, as Sir Lawrence Weaver said, "bears much the same relation to the Hall of Honour as the sanctuary of a church to its nave"—it is unique and sacred . . . and the breath-taking view from the Argyll Battery, where you can brood over the city spreadeagled at your feet.

Then there is that elegant thoroughfare—Princes Street. I walked down it on a Saturday morning and compared it with other international streets of fashion. New York has Fifth Avenue, Rome the Via Condotti, Paris the Rue de la Paix, and London has Bond Street. Each personifies wealth and leisure, vanity and luxury, yet I felt that none possesses the austere vitality and stately snobbishness of Princes Street. The thoroughfare is worthy of a



Capital. Everything and everybody seem unhurried. Nowhere else do tweeds look so attractive. Nowhere else have I seen so many middle-aged women openly flaunting their maturity. One hour a day . . . between eleven and noon . . . they come into their own, and then melt into the obscurity of domesticity.

I was interested to note the different types. Girl students, probably from the Domestic Science College, hurry along for morning coffee. Unmistakable were the carefully groomed business men with time on their hands. An occasional be-kilted officer looked militarily languid. Some of the older men look as if they are still breathing the defiance of the '45. A cleric passed,

acutely conscious of his mission. Then there were the *foreigners*—Festival invaders—who would walk against the human tide instead of observing tradition. Every now and then the stream is broken by rivulets turning into Binns—McVitie's—Crawfords—Jenners—Forsyths. Many are content to let their eyes shop-gaze in stylishly dressed windows. Such is Princes Street on a Saturday morning . . . not as well-dressed as the pre-war days, but still a titillating interlude before adjourning for lunch in the Aperitif.

What else has Edinburgh to offer? Blending past and present in cryptic phrases . . . the heraldic devices in the Chapel of the Knights of the Thistle in St. Giles' Cathedral . . . the tub-thumpers at the Mound on Sunday nights . . . an extinct volcano, Arthur's Seat, which credulous maidens scale at dawn on May Day in the hope that Nature will make amends . . . seasickness in a tram-car along Lothian Road . . . the smell of breweries and new bread . . . the trek to the Zoo . . . the floral clock in Festival guise . . . the nursery of golfing history on the Meadows . . . the *laissez-faire* sprawl of urbanized suburbia . . . the soothing effect of a dinner-dance in the Pompadour.

All these concomitants . . . ancient and modern . . . give to Edinburgh its striking individuality, an individuality that comes into its own during the three glorious Festival weeks. It comes to a close on a note similar to that on which the Season ended. Darkened halls and theatres, deserted platforms and stages proclaim the finish of the International Festival of Music and Drama. John Knox, standing in the courtyard of the Assembly Hall, can no longer fulminate against the crowds flocking maybe to see *Hamlet*. Throughout it all Edinburgh behaves like a capital city. She shows an easy grace and a fair sense of the fitness of things. Easily and spontaneously she rises to a great occasion. By maintaining the international character and standard of this open house to the Arts, Edinburgh has acquired a reputation comparable to that of Bayreuth or Salzburg . . . a fitting companion to the London Season.

## HOLIDAY TASTES

DELIGHT in the story told by Osbert Sitwell in *Noble Essences* of the robust old country-neighbour, one of the last of the squires, who was heard during a severe thunderstorm thus to address his faithful and ageing servant: "Alec, you damn fool, don't stand about there, doing nothing! Climb up the lightning-conductor, can't you, and see if it's working!" Sitwell's argument is apt. The man who climbs such an instrument naturally has a more exciting life than he who watches the storm and writes about it. In like degree a writer's life is duller than that of a man of deeds. The argument can be extended to the topic of holidays. The man who takes a summer vacation obviously has a fuller life than he who writes about it *in absentia*. That being so, I shall limit my observations to the catholicity of tastes that influence the choice of potential holiday-seekers after the Season has ended.

I could persuade myself that these views are so general as not to be worth setting down, were it not that strong likes and dislikes lose nothing by being shared with the whole world. Take, for instance, the littoral enthusiasts. Every summer thousands of people make a pilgrimage to the sea. They have a wonderful time. Thousands of letters and lewd postcards bear testimony to the fact. Yet these enthusiasms are often sham. If you don't believe me, analyse a few of these so-called joys. Mark Sheridan used to chant: "You can do a lot of things at the seaside that you can't do in town!" How right he was. You can walk bare-footed on shingle intermingled with broken glass; you can inhale the particular ozone of those parts of the beach which the sea thinks fit to ignore, zones that attract rubbish, flies, and decayed fish; you can hear the incessant cries of children "as shrill as swifts in upper air"; you watch weary parents handling pails that refuse to hold water, using spades that never dig; wander off with sand and stones in shoes, hair thick with salt, to possible unwholesome meals. Most of these sufferers have left comfortable

homes to endure such privations for the privilege of looking at the sea at Torquay, Bournemouth, Eastbourne, Brighton, and so on. I maintain that the pleasures of a seaside holiday can be overrated.

What of the other choices? One group stands out, specialized and exclusive. Their views are admirably expressed by Professor G. M. Trevelyan when he said that he had two doctors, his left leg and his right. When body and mind are out of gear he has only to call in these doctors to be well again. A walking holiday is not everybody's choice. Only once have I been tempted. I had both silence and solitude. The thought of having a companion was jarring. It would have been necessary to know his wishes. The pace might have been too fast. Innumerable other considerations would have intruded, not least being his desire to talk. It is better to hear the silence as you walk. I was unlucky with the weather. It rained and rained and rained. I can still feel the warm drops on my head and shoulders. The air had a soothing perfume about it. The countryside was the loneliest place on earth and I loved its loneliness. Black, dripping trees overhung the wan grass. The birds were hushed. Occasionally the rain hissed among the leaves. It was an eloquent sound, as if the trees were whispering that they had been waiting for me to come by, even thus, for one minute in the night.

The most difficult individual to please on this question of holidays is the one stricken with *ennui*. The type is fairly common after the Season. He has been everywhere, done everything, met everybody, and is wearily tired of living. At the other extreme is the man who for the first time comes to the hour when he learns that after all the world was not created to make him happy. No one ever believes this simple truth save on the authority of their own experience. I can only say that in both instances a walking holiday might well restore their balance and sense of proportion. There are no fixed rules. Paths and by-paths are unmarked. Everyone does that which is pleasing to himself, and his choice is right.

Maybe it is necessary to be really young to get the best out of a holiday. Self-analysis is a guide. Search back to puberty and beyond. We find an expectant gallery of impressions. I can recall in vivid detail the sense of freedom, the anticipation of meals that would be different, the feeling of summer heat as I stretched

on the grass. Never has the whirr of a mowing-machine been so suggestive of holiday freedom. Going away for a youngster can be a crescendo of pleasures. They merge in a succession of joys. There is an unconscious retransfiguration of things both trite and commonplace. Somehow I always associate such reactions with picnic days. Picnic baskets have a spell of their own. Hard-boiled eggs are hardly a delicacy, yet they taste differently when eaten in the open air, particularly when the salt is produced in a screw of newspaper. Nobody wishes to devour sandwiches for ever, but it is remarkable how delectable two smeary pieces of bread encasing unappetizing cold beef can become. The meal has almost sacramental significance. As a connoisseur once remarked, the essential quality of a picnic is the doing of perfectly normal things in an abnormal place or manner. It is that quality that appeals so strongly to youth, the mental picture of adults squatting in a circle round baskets and glasses and bottles. Something of this quality is invested in a visit to a summer circus. There is nothing of the inherent magnitude of the London circus, where everything precludes simplicity. Maybe we can still experience the excitement of a holiday visit as a youngster to a village show. It had a faerie quality compounded of trodden earth, smoky flares, the smell of kerosene, the unpretentious atmosphere of sawdust rough-and-tumble under canvas. I have never been able to recapture the circus thrills that revolved round a modest tent-pole in a little field.

Then there are those who only consider they have had a holiday if they penetrate into the improbable Continent. It is an admirable way of reassessing our English consciousness. We are an extraordinary race. We refuse to be un-English. The very word "foreigner" puts us on our guard. No sooner do we quit these shores than someone is clamouring for tea and marmalade. At times it is difficult to discover what some people gain from visits abroad. In what way, for instance, does the ordinary English visitor benefit from a visit to France? In the first place it is foolish to imagine that France is England. Thousands of tourists failing to appreciate that simple fact leave themselves open to stories at the expense of their own nationality. A parochial mind rarely appreciates an outlook other than its own. The danger with the Englishman of today is that preoccupation with domestic worries is making him ultra-English when he crosses the Channel. As a

result he cannot enjoy what little he is able to afford for the simple reason that it has first to be censured by his insular mentality. Admittedly France, and Paris in particular, is still not what it was before the war. I look back to Paris when it vibrated with life. Josephine Baker at the Folies Bergère, Maurice Chevalier at the Casino de Paris. A rejuvenated Mistinguett more charming than ever. Tramway lines lingered in unexpected corners. The dome of Sacré Coeur floodlit against a twinkling night sky. Those hours were lighthearted in a way unknown today. But the core remains.

There is something about Paris that places it above the rival charms of Rome, Florence, Naples, or Buda-Pesth. The connoisseur views Paris through more appraising eyes. He recognizes the fact that Paris is the colander into which pour ideas, theories and beliefs that are eventually returned to the world in purified guise. Parisian studios, cafés, stately houses, and tenements form the sifting-ground that transcends the boundaries of nationality. Parts of Paris have been anglicized. Montmartre is bogus. Montparnasse has been taken over by the cosmopolitan bourgeoisie. Yet there remains an intelligent kernel. Somewhat surprisingly at first encounter it seems as insular as England. Foreign travel is not considered necessary to these French idealists. Reflection confirms that the need does not exist. The world comes to them instead. Not only that, but their food and wine are beyond reproach. France is essentially a country of artists, men and women who have mastered the art of living and enjoy every minute of it. It is obvious that the chance tourist cannot assimilate all these impressions in a few days. Admittedly it is possible to lose the truth by knowing too much. But this is a region where the ignorant stranger cannot hope to penetrate unaided. At the best, tourist impressions are often linked with the novelty of noting where the Bastille formerly stood; seeing the traditional gargoyle on Notre Dame; snatched recollections of Fontainebleau and Versailles; golf at Deauville; Gothic cathedrals; the castles of the Loire by moonlight; innumerable places of uncertain name, full of charm and gracious people. These are some of the things that make France a society similar to England, only more feminine in conscious awareness of her delicate civilization, a fitting postscript to the crowded programme of the Season.

There is, however, one aspect of France which every tourist can appreciate even on a short visit. He can discover the lost art of eating. In England we eat stupidly. It has become a routine business with the emphasis on necessity rather than art. No comment on this subject is complete without a quotation from Brillat-Savarin. The words should be remembered: "Let the act of consumption be deliberate, the dinner being the last business of the day; and let the guests consider themselves as travellers who are to arrive together at the same place of destination." Nowhere is this truer than in Paris, where it is still possible to eat and drink with dignity, but only if the tourist-ridden hotels are avoided. The reason is not far to seek. In such surroundings the gourmet tends to become a glutton and the delicate art of eating dies. Paris has many outstanding restaurants where gastronomic perception is anticipated. An old restaurant on the Quai de la Tournelle bears an enviable reputation. Its cellar is exceptional. The wine list transports you to the sunlit slopes of Bordeaux. If initial impressions be sought, the chances are that the memory will retain the views of Notre Dame looming in uncertain outline through the gathering dusk, whilst luscious ducks, for which this restaurant is justly famed, are being prepared before your eyes with ritualistic ceremony.

It is not necessary to patronize fashionable haunts to sample exquisite food. Many a humble Parisian restaurant, patronized by clerk and working-man, produces a meal that reflects imaginative cooking. The art of eating is not confined to a single class. The illustrious customer and the humble artisan can sit down to a repast served with delicacy and attention. Cheese is an obvious example, the diet of rich and poor. In Paris we realize the difference between the Camembert as served in England and the perfection of its ripening in France. Not for nothing was a statue erected in 1791 to Madame Harel for inventing this famous French cheese. Think also of Roquefort which has enjoyed its reputation for two thousand years. Taste a genuine French blue cheese and spurious imitations become sawdust. Then a word about the wines of France. Only in this fair country can we appreciate the connoisseurship of Burgundy, Bordeaux and Champagne. It would be possible to laud at length on the home of wine and wine-lovers. Suffice it to say that the tourist in France, however short his stay, has a unique opportunity of becoming a



discriminating epicure. Culinary art, like all art, must receive appreciative encouragement, otherwise it languishes and dies. Gastronomic virtue need not remain across the Channel.

If the continent holds no appeal, the prospect of a sea voyage to America may be more attractive. However many times the trip may have been made there is always a thrill at seeing the glare of New York in the night sky. The Statue of Liberty may be commonplace. Its picture is known to every sixth-form child. Yet when this massive luminous statue, seemingly balanced on the water with uplifted arm, comes into view, its inner parabolic meaning is never wasted. Nothing dims it . . . not even the glare of New York or Jersey City. It stands out as the symbol of the New World. Ask any stranger what his first reactions to New York Harbour are like. Usually the answer is the same. "Just what I expected. Lights everywhere, strange sky signs, and Manhattan Island beckoning in the distance." New York is familiar before we land. It is vulgar, ostentatious, blaring and gaudy. The traffic makes our provincial efforts look like village bustle. Crowd scenes make you realize that for once Hollywood can be reasonably accurate, and if we like being impressed some wiseacre will doubtless tell us that New York has 43,000 elevators which carry over 17 million passengers every day. There is nothing we can do about it. The best thing is to make a mental note to impress our friends at home when we get back.

But that is not the end. A few further statistics claim that New York boasts of nine million miles of telephone wire, and houses 18,000 policemen who are alleged to walk 3,000 miles of streets. In case we imagine that our arrival should be headline news, a further news item has a sobering effect. It is that there are usually 300,000 other visitors in the city at the same time, which doubtless accounts for the absence of red carpet. If you doubt it, walk down Fifth Avenue and ask the whereabouts of some store. The odds are that the pedestrian will be a stranger like yourself, or an American who refuses to admit the fact to an Englishman, and consequently gives you wrong information. There is no doubt about it. A holiday trip to New York can be invigorating. Provided the stay is reasonably short, the experience is an educational enjoyment. By the time you take a last glimpse of the down-town skyscrapers as you sail for home, your mental capital of memories will have been greatly enriched.

But all this has not decided which is the best choice for a holiday after the Season. We can go with the crowds, or we can be different. Remember that to the ant the individual is the enemy. I think it is better to remain in that category . . . at least, it allows for an occasional unorthodox surprise.

## VALE

THERE is a sense of sad beauty about the approach of autumn. The harvest is gathered. The fields are broad expanses of mellow stubble. Farm-teams plod across plough-land. Water-meadows are wreathed in grey mists. The fleeting glory of summer is slipping away. The leaves are perishing, but in their dying attain a brilliance that was denied in spring. Against the glow of autumnal tints the plumage of birds stands out in vivid contrast. Their song is eager, as if sharpened by the keen air. Nature is restless. The woods echo to the deep bark of the fallow buck and the cry of the brown owl. The black-and-white of the magpie darts everywhere. A touch of frost besparkles the gossamer webs of spiders into geometrical lines of rippling silk. The elms, the larches, the maples . . . all are resplendent in russet richness. The night air smells of frost, but before the trees are naked, our thoughts return to the months that are gone, to the pleasures that went with the London Season.

We try to recapture moments of happiness under an English sun, moments that passed all too quickly. The cricketer has a sadness peculiar to himself. Cricket and an English summer go hand-in-hand. They depart when the leaves begin to fall like burnished petals of gold. The end of the season comes on a quiet note. Outwardly there is no difference to the over that is about to be bowled, but the silent circle of spectators know. They lean forward so as not to miss any incident. The shadows are lengthening as the last ball is bowled, the last run made. The players melt away into the obscurity of the pavilion. The stumps are drawn. The ground lies deserted. The season has ended.

Or perhaps we recall the leisured hours at Henley. The punts, the lawns, Old Blues, graceful poplars, and the movement of excitement that ripples along the floating line of colour as straining eights cleave the waters. When wind and rain have reduced the leaves to mould, the memory of this luscious festival of the Thames will be as faint as the vision of strawberries and

cream. The recollection of the wave of tension that swept across the Epsom Downs is more vivid. The canvas is bolder. The Derby is so essentially English. The clamour in Tattersall's before the race starts . . . the hunchback tipster . . . the sweep of Tattenham Corner . . . the sound of hoofs . . . the gipsy who crossed our palms with silver . . . the mixed emotions of thousands as the favourite failed . . . the woman with the beggar . . . the silken colours of crouching jockeys. The scene belongs to Frith, Rowlandson and Lavengro. Should thoughts turn to sun-baked golf links, many familiar sounds return to our ears. The dull thudding of hundreds of feet on fairways. The outpoured song of a skylark soaring heavenwards. The swish of steel carving an arc through the air. The vision of a golf ball outlined against wisps of cloud. St. Andrews . . . the Old Course . . . Old Tom Morris's shop. The stone bridge over the Swilcan . . . elderly caddies leaning over the white rails. Excited galleries. Silent fairways in the evening. A tranquil bay and birds running on the greens.

But many other memories are treasured. The foam of colour at Ascot . . . the night-sky illuminated with flashing fireworks at Eton . . . glimpses of London with the Season at its height . . . the tranquillity of Goodwood. The clicking of polo sticks, the vivid white ball, ponies with glistening withers, the bell, and the end of the first chukker. Such might be our musings on the eve of autumn, memories that mingle with a whiff of new-mown hay and the spontaneous outburst of the Dawn Chorus at sunrise. All are gone. The leaves are falling fast, but fresh pleasures and activities come with the change of season. Those who long for hunting feel the blood tingling in their veins as the acorns slip from their cups and the larches stand sere under an autumn sky. Soon the fences will be flying beneath the horses' hoofs, the music of hounds, and the wind rushing in our ears. But there are those who prefer the milder recreation of hacking. The hunting-man is inclined to be contemptuous. Such taunts are unjustified, for Masters of Hounds rarely encroach upon the best hacking country. Winter hacking has a charm of its own. The solitary rider. The squelching suck of the hoof on turf. The ploughman leading a mud-stained team. The warm pungency of a farmyard. The empty fields. All form part of an undisturbed countryside dyed in russet.

Partridge shooting begins on the First of September, the

pheasant season on the First of October. Here indeed are hours of pleasure, similar in anticipation, distinctive in execution. The pheasant has greater speed than the partridge, but is easier to take, for he swings on a wider arc. The partridge, on the other hand, is a bundle of unpredictable contradictions. His swerves are sharp and sudden. The erratic behaviour of a partridge can never be fathomed standing in a line of guns. Walking them up is the only satisfactory way. Early October is too early for enjoyable pheasant shooting. The birds are too callow. It is better to wait for a few weeks. By then the moult will have ended and cock pheasants will fly strongly in a splash of bronze and scarlet. Those days will soon be here. Beaters in fields of stubble. Birches almost bare. A low wintry sun, long shadows, and a cold sheen on wet earth.

Or perhaps the approach of winter holds promise of tense hours when

“Thirty fighting devils, ten thousand throats,  
Thundering joy at each pass and tackle and punt.”

Memories of the rush of feet on earth. The gasps of the players and the thud of bodies being hurled to the ground. The unmistakable impact of leather coming into contact with leather. Steam and breath rising from sweating bodies. Desperation matching determination in heaving scrums. The fierce nationalism of Murrayfield. Tier upon tier of concrete terraces packed with humanity. The kilts of the pipers before the match starts. The ever-deepening roar of seventy thousand spectators. The friendly compactness of Lansdowne Road. The rowdy enthusiasm of an Irish crowd. Jaunting-cars. The oval shape of Cardiff Arms Park. The stirring moment before the kick-off when the fiery Celtic spirit of Wales is given expression by thousands of throats in *Land of My Fathers*. Twickenham with towering stands disappearing into greyness. The promenade where all who are famous walk. Military bands. The gloom as the light of a wintry afternoon fades and we are

“. . . held by the brightening orange lights of the matches  
Perpetually pricking the haze across the ground.”

In a few minutes the players will revel in the luxury of hot baths and steaming drinks. We will go home and celebrate a victory by opening a bottle of port.

Autumn can also be the season for anglers. Not those who dream only of trout. They, poor souls, must put away fly-rods and rest content with memories until the season reopens and the mayflies dance with gauze-like wings. We have visions of striding through the meadow grass, the very air tremulous with their number. Birds were in excited pursuit and moorhens made frequent forays from behind the sedges as the flies sailed down. Then, all at once, the mayflies tired of dancing, and, as if by some signal, they settled on the grass. Looking up the stream we noticed that all the countless thousands had done the same. After a few minutes the mad dance began again. Many locked together in mid-air, fell into the river, for a second sailed upright, then the wings would collapse on the water, a dim shape would appear, a flash of silver, and the victim was sucked down by a fat roach.

All that has gone, but since the days of St. Ambrose the angler's autumn has been brightened by the grayling. A gold witch or a small Wickham may bring a brisk piece of sport . . . but the grayling is canny and cautious. As Izaak Walton wrote: "He lives in such rivers as the trout does, and is usually taken with the same bait as the trout is, and after the same manner." The fact that both species are to be found in the same water is of considerable advantage for one succeeds the other in timely season . . . and grayling can be an agreeable dish . . . as the monks of old knew.

There may come back memories of an early morning walk in May. A brooding silence and feeling of suspended activity told that the night had not yet gone. The air of intent watchfulness was broken by the distant crowing of a cock, a sound unchallenged apart from the far-away screech of an owl. Then, gradually a quiver seemed to pass through the fields, drowsily at first, but slowly gathering volume until like an ever-swelling wave of molten gold, a symphony of bird-song flowed from every bush and tree until the air shivered with tremulous music. There is nothing to equal this rapturous chorus in the whole year and only those who walk for that short half-hour before a May sunrise can hear these shimmering sounds that gradually subside and fade away into a silent pool.

But there are those for whom the herald of winter brings strange and wild music. The canvas on which memory lingers is sombre grey. Perhaps a lonely village on the coast of East Anglia . . . mud flats . . . desolate marshes . . . the shrill cry of curlews. Then dawns that most important day in late October . . . the coming of the wild geese. I think of a creek and salt marshes beyond, the greyish-green haunt of snipe and redshank, curlew and wild duck; the sand dunes flanked by the desolate pine-fringed shore; the mud flats, ochre-shaded; wind-scalloped sand, and the cold sea. You never know how knife-like can be the cut of the wind until you crouch in rough marram grass by the dunes waiting for dawn to break . . . waiting for the grey-lags to come from the inaccessible mud flats beyond the marshes. I can still hear their high-pitched nasal voices as, like wisps of cloud, they came in a wedge-shaped phalanx. With the aid of glasses I could pick out the long outstretched necks and widespread pointed wings. Equally as impressive was a glimpse of grey-lags at their feeding-ground in the failing light of a wintry afternoon—the low, sociable gabble of a comfortable browse in luscious grass. The dark plumage of the ganders stood out as they paused frequently to survey the marsh, supplementing the alertness of the sentry. I moved suddenly, and a guttural warning caused every head to look up. To those who think only of the kill, such moments are so much wasted time, but I am always thrilled when the silence is broken by strident cries and the heavy flapping of huge wings. The noise rouses the entire marsh. Gulls and lapwings rise. Rooks clamour in sympathy. All along the marsh droves of grey-lag are rising. They sail out in the fading light in long irregular wedges, heading for the mud flats that fringe the sea where they can paddle, cackle and sleep undisturbed save for the piping of waders, the cry of gulls and noise of the waves.

There is purpose behind the unearthly swish of the grey-lag flight, and prophecy in their direction. Those who would learn must recall the Fool's wisdom in *Lear*: "Winter's not gone yet, if the wild geese fly that way."

Now, your shooting-stick, a stout pair of shoes, and a mackintosh! The London Season is but a memory, and another season is about to begin.











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